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HINTS
ON
SHOOTING AND FISHING,
&c.

BOTH ON SEA AND LAND,
AND IN THE
FRESHWATER LOCHS OF SCOTLAND;

BEING
THE EXPERIENCES
OF
CHRISTOPHER IDLE, ESQ.



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TO
THE LORD CHIEF JUSTICE JERVIS,

~~This little Work,~~

A SLIGHT TRIBUTE OF UNBOUNDED ESTEEM,
LIFE-LONG FRIENDSHIP, AND HEARTFELT GRATITUDE,

IS, WITH PERMISSION,

DEDICATED,

BY HIS FRIEND AND BROTHER-SPORTSMAN OF EARLY DAYS,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

So many excellent works have been written on shooting and all that relates to it, that it might at first sight appear unnecessary to introduce to the public another work on so beaten a subject. But if much has been communicated, much also has been passed over, either as unworthy of notice, or accidentally omitted, by those excellent, zealous, and intelligent sportsmen, who have already written on the subject; and, as time goes on, each day's experience may be productive of something new attracting our observation, and, at the same time, perhaps, not altogether unworthy of attention. This work is written principally, but not exclusively, for young sportsmen. It is the result of more than thirty years' practical experience, and I trust will be found to contain information on all points necessary for the safe, com-

fortable, and efficient enjoyment of the rational, healthy, and manly exercise of shooting; with some suggestions on boating, sailing, and sea-loch fishing, and many other collateral subjects, in which all sportsmen take an interest.

C. I.

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HINTS

ON

SHOOTING, FISHING,

&c. &c.

GUNS.

THE principle of gun-making at the present day is so thoroughly understood, and the workmanship brought to so much perfection, that there is no difficulty in obtaining good guns.

In the days of "flint and steel," poor Joe Manton "stood pre-eminent amongst his fellows," but at the present time, there is little, if any difference, among London makers either as to the intrinsic merit of their guns, or as to the finish of their work. Gunmakers have received such liberal support and remuneration, that they have been enabled to give high wages to their workmen, and

from this much good has arisen — the work has been distributed into branches, and each branch brought to great perfection, owing to its being the exclusive business of one man.

I will not take upon myself the ungracious office of recommending one gunmaker in preference to another. I have shot with very many guns of London makers of repute, and found little difference—none, however, in the present day in my opinion are superior to Joe Manton, and few equal to him. Every part of Joe Manton's guns was equally good in point of quality and workmanship. Strength, combined with neatness and the highest possible finish; hence the extraordinary durability of his guns, and the good external appearance which they maintain even to the very last, if properly taken care of.

But to return, I advise every young sportsman to buy his guns of a first-rate London maker. The price is high, but relatively to rent paid for houses and wages to workmen it is not so much out of the way, and if ready money be paid, a liberal discount will always be allowed. Never buy a second-hand gun, except you know how it has been used, and have ascertained that it was really made by the man whose name it bears, as there is much imposition in this respect.

You may purchase cheap guns from country makers, but you will incur the same risk of dis-

satisfaction as if you were to confide the making of your dress coat to a country tailor. There is generally the same difference between the quality, appearance, and finish of the two articles, although a country gun may occasionally be found to shoot as well as a London one, and a country coat to wear and look as well; but, generally speaking, the reverse is the case. A country gun is seldom intrinsically as good as a London one, and never so well finished; there are, I believe, one or two provincial makers who are considered exceptions, although I have not met with them.

I have seen and used country guns which were very deficient and ineffective: arising principally from imperfect boring, and from an absence of that high internal polish of the calibre which so particularly characterises all London guns. It must be obvious that the harder the internal surface of the calibre and the brighter the polish, the farther and more forcibly will the shot be propelled, as we all know from experience when we have had hard shooting from one gun, that in proportion as the barrels become foul, the distance of killing is gradually reduced: hence I think it may be fairly inferred that the reverse of the proposition is equally true, that the cleaner, harder, and brighter the internal surface over which the shot passes, the greater will be the distance to which it will be propelled:—and as

to finish in other respects, the reason is equally obvious; a country gun is generally finished by a few hands, and these rarely first-rate, as first-rate men move off to London in quest of higher wages than they can ever procure in the country. The locks, too, are very frequently signally deficient, sometimes being wood-bound, and stiff in their movements, and sometimes very unequal in their strength, hence occasioning much disappointment.

I will not enter upon the scientific part of the subject of gun-making, nor trouble my readers about the principle of boring barrels, finishing locks, or polishing gun-stocks, these matters being quite safe in the keeping of gunmakers, and the knowledge of them not necessary to the possession and use of the best guns that can be made.

With regard to calibre, weight, length of barrels, and length and inflection of stock, these will depend entirely on circumstances, being *relative* points. The length of stock will depend upon the length of your arms, and the inflection or bend of it upon the length of your neck, and as good shooting much depends on your having a stock which exactly suits you, you cannot be too particular in this respect when ordering your guns. If the stock be too crooked, or too short from the trigger to the keel plate, you will be liable to shoot under your birds,

especially if your gun be a heavy one, and there be too much weight forward.*

It is the fashion of the present day to use heavy guns of large calibre ; this in my opinion for ordinary shooting is a mistake. It is very true that with a heavy gun you have a better chance, and may possibly kill at a greater distance, inasmuch as you can put in a heavier charge and larger shot, the latter lying as compact and going as close from a heavy gun as smaller shot will from a gun of less weight ; but for partridge, pheasant, or grouse, at the beginning of the season, a gun of 14 or even 16 calibre will answer every purpose without encumbering yourself needlessly with extra weight, and in a long day's shooting a heavy gun will be found very fatiguing. For my own part, if I were grouse shooting, even in the months of October and November, when the birds are wild, and I were working hard from morning till night, and endeavouring to kill as much as possible, I should infinitely prefer a light handy gun (No. 14. calibre), carrying $1\frac{1}{4}$ oz. of shot, to a heavy one carrying 2 oz. (No. 9. is the calibre now most in fashion), and I am convinced any good shot would kill more grouse with the light gun than with the heavy one, simply because in quick shooting, which it

* Distance from trigger at full-cock $14\frac{1}{2}$ inches to butt-end, for long arms.

would be at that season of the year, he would get the lighter gun more readily to the shoulder, and not be so liable when fagged towards the end of the day to shoot under his birds, as he would be with a heavy gun.

It frequently happens after following your dogs up a steep mountain as fast as you can walk, when they are drawing after running birds, that the latter rise exactly as you are reaching the summit of the hill, just when all the breath is nearly pumped out of your body, and you are obliged to shoot quick, as the birds are escaping from your sight over the top of the mountain: it is then you experience the great advantage of a light gun and the disadvantage of a heavy one. I am presuming the sportsman to be a keen and indefatigable one and using his own legs; should, however, the case be otherwise and a pony be used, and no great fatigue incurred, then of course a heavy gun may be used to advantage, especially at the latter part of the season, when the birds are wild; but the riding on the hills is generally so very bad and difficult, and the ponies so very apt to stumble and fall, and occasionally get bogged (unless they are old mountaineers and used to the work), that walking to a man in sound health and in good condition is far preferable, when once arrived at the scene of action. Ponies of course are indispensable in going to and returning from distant

moors, but if you ride when your dogs are at work you will be sure to lose many shots. Single birds will frequently rise close to you which have escaped your dogs, however good they may be, especially where the heather is deep, and this at a time when grouse are wildest, as I have always found there a few single old cocks who will lie close at all seasons of the year.

I have heard many sportsmen say they prefer heavy guns to light ones because they can put in a heavier charge and kill at greater distances : this is very true in the case of those who are good shots and have at the same time strength to carry a heavy gun through a long day's hard work ; but I am persuaded that, notwithstanding the additional chance which more metal and increase of charge would give, the extra weight in the hands of an indifferent shot would more than counterbalance the advantage of the extra charge, inasmuch as all indifferent shots shoot both under and behind their birds, and the liability to do this would be very much increased by the extra weight.

Let any one who considers himself an indifferent shot make the experiment on the hills in the months of October and November, when the grouse shooting in my opinion is decidedly the best. To kill at long distances, increase your charge of powder, but not that of your shot. It is a bad plan to overweight your powder ; it not only de-

creases your power of killing at a distance, but produces a disagreeable recoil.

PRECAUTIONARY SUGGESTIONS IN THE
USE OF THE GUN,
ESPECIALLY AS TO LOADING.

So many serious accidents have happened, and are continually occurring in the simple process of loading, from the neglect of the most ordinary and obvious precautions, that it may not perhaps be amiss to make a few observations on the subject, with a view, if possible, of preventing their recurrence. This can only be done by inducing sportsmen to adopt some fixed rule and plan, never to be departed from. This will occasion no trouble or loss of time, or be in any way an impediment to sport, but merely demand a little forethought.

Of the several causes of accident during loading, the most common is that of loading one barrel immediately after having discharged it, with the lock of the other barrel at full-cock, the jarring of the ramrod in loading causing the lock to go off: how this takes place with a good lock,

perfectly clean, is difficult to explain satisfactorily. The only way to guard against it, is to make a rule, immediately after discharging only one barrel, of putting the lock of the other on half-cock, and also invariably to place the gun in such a manner that the barrel which you are loading is *nearer* to your hand than the loaded one, in which case your right hand will *not* be *over* the loaded barrel when you are ramming down your charge, and will escape intact in the event of an accidental discharge. Many will be ready to say that my suggestion is altogether superfluous, as who would ever load one barrel with the lock of the other at full-cock, if they thought of it, and it were not done in the hurry of the moment. I am well aware of the justice of this observation, but as, unfortunately for those who have suffered, it was merely because they did *not* think of it, I trust it may not be entirely without advantage to invite attention to the subject, so that the vital necessity of carefulness may be ever present to the memory even in moments of the greatest excitement, for it is generally at such times that accidents occur.

As an instance of the uncertainty of locks, I can state a circumstance which occurred to myself a few years since. I had discharged one barrel at a bird, and having wounded it, was watching its flight, resting the stock of the gun on the

ground, when the other barrel went off, nothing whatever having touched the lock, as I was standing in an open place, and no dog was near me at the time. As I never allow the point of my own gun to be towards myself, having received and adhered to that instructive lesson from the very commencement of my sporting career, I was of course intact; but I was somewhat alarmed, and very much astonished, as my gun was a first-rate one, and unimpaired by use. I however found, on examining the delinquent lock, that some common oil had been used, and had become, as is invariably the case with bad oil, thick and adhesive, thus impeding the safe and perfect movement of the lock, and rendering the retention of the sear by the tumbler doubtful and uncertain. Hence the necessity which devolves on every sportsman of looking after his own locks, and seeing that only suitable oil, such as is used by watch-makers, or such as may be made specially for the purpose, is applied, as this will neither cake nor become glutinous, nor adhesive. The bad oil, I have no doubt, was the occasion of my accident.

Another cause of accident in loading is to be found in tow being left in the breech of the gun after cleaning, owing to the negligence of the person who may have washed your gun. If the quantity of tow be so small as not to interfere with the discharge of the gun after it is loaded, the

risk arises from the small portion which might remain in an ignited state, so that on your re-loading, an explosion would take place and communicate with your powder-horn, and the loss of your hand might be the unfortunate consequence : this is not of frequent occurrence, but still as it has happened, in spite of patent powder-horns, it is just as well to obviate the possibility of its recurrence, remote as the chance may be, by the adoption of such precautions as may prevent it, and this is simply to make a point, before loading for the first time in the morning, of invariably dropping your ramrod into each barrel ; you will then readily ascertain, by the sound of the ramrod when it reaches the breech, whether all is right or not. The result being satisfactory, you may then proceed safely to load, letting the cocks, or strikers, in the first place, gently down on the nipples, then charge your barrels, and, lastly, put on your caps.

Never think of warming your gun before loading it, by firing off caps, as is sometimes most unadvisedly done, because by this superfluous and unnecessary process the detonating gas will be forced into your barrels, create rust, and thereby injure your gun. A gun properly cleaned requires no warming previous to loading. The caps must on no account be put on the nipples before loading, because if the powder were forced into the cap, it would cake, and a miss-fire would inevitably en-

sue. Should this be done by accident, in the hurry of the moment, always remove the cap, clean the top and surface of the nipple, and put on a fresh cap. Sometimes if the cap be put on before loading, and fit very close, the air may prevent the powder from entering the nipple, a miss-fire would equally be the consequence, although the cap would go off. I have witnessed two or three consecutive miss-fires in consequence of this preliminary mistake, because the person would not give himself the trouble in the first instance to draw the charge, which in *this* case is the only certain remedy.

When the gun is loaded, *never* allow the cocks to remain *down* on the nipples, either when in or out of hand, as this position is dangerous, and many very serious accidents have arisen from it, under the erroneous impression that it was safer than half-cock, when, in fact, it is not more safe than full-cock, even if so much so. If the cocks be down, and the gun be placed against a wall, and accidentally thrown down, it would probably explode if the cocks came in contact with the floor, which would not be the case if the gun were at half-cock.

Three accidents from having the cocks down, one fatal, the second most serious, and the third only ending in alarm, and conveying admonition for the future, came within my immediate knowledge in France. A Captain U——

was out shooting a few miles from where I was residing; he had to pass through a thick hedge, and let down the cocks, and was drawing the gun after him, thinking himself quite safe, the muzzle being towards him, when one of the cocks was drawn back by a branch, and released; a discharge was the consequence, and the unfortunate gentleman was killed on the spot.

Another case was that of a Frenchman, with whom I was personally acquainted; he was out snipe shooting, and wished to pass from one marais to the other, the two marais, or marshes, being divided or separated by a canal; and by way of passage from one to the other, a strong pole had been laid horizontally across the canal, attached and fastened to another pole inserted perpendicularly, midway between the two banks, by which means both poles were steady. The Frenchman let down the cocks upon the nipples, and extended the butt-end of his gun towards the perpendicular pole, with a view of catching the same with the guard of his gun, and thereby enabling himself to keep his equilibrium as he passed over the pole; but unfortunately he caught the pole with one of the cocks of his gun instead of with the guard, which being raised, and almost instantly released, a discharge took place, and the entire contents of the barrel were received in the hand and arm, from the palm of the hand up to the elbow.

The third instance was that of a loaded rifle. A party of Frenchmen with whom I was acquainted were going out boar hunting. Intending to proceed to the scene of action in a light car, they had previously loaded their rifles, one of which was being handed into the vehicle by the owner with the cock down and the muzzle towards himself; when the cock caught part of his friend's dress, was raised, released, and the rifle discharged; the ball passed close by my friend's body into the ground. A serious alarm was the sole consequence, in addition to a very instructive lesson conveyed as to the future, not only as regards the cocks of the gun, but also the *direction of the muzzle*, the escape having been an "hair's breadth" one.

A rule respecting this *latter* point is of too much importance to be passed over here, as from its neglect many a life has been lost. The rule to be rigidly observed on all occasions is this, — that you never, under any circumstances, carry or place your gun in such a position, whether you *know* it to be loaded or *not*, that the muzzle is towards yourself; and if you make this a fixed rule, at the same time take equal care that no one who is shooting with you carries his gun with the muzzle towards you. You will of course be equally just and scrupulous towards others: if you owe a duty towards yourself in this respect, you owe one equally to your neighbour or brother sportsman; you will

therefore avoid exposing him to the predicament which you take special care to avert from yourself.

A friend of mine was shooting some years since in one of the Royal forests near Paris, and was proceeding in a narrow footpath with his gun over his shoulder, cocked, as he invariably carried it; he was followed by a *garde de chasse*; a twig caught one of the triggers, a discharge took place, and the *garde* was killed on the spot: had this man entertained the respect which I think due to the muzzle of a loaded gun this would not have happened. My friend was of course very much grieved and distressed at the accident, and afforded all the reparation in his power by providing for the man's wife and family.

I have frequently witnessed the accidental discharge of guns in the hands of the careless and unskilful; the excuse has been that they were merely uncocking their gun, and that the cock slipped, or some or other equally unsatisfactory reason. It is always advisable, when you cannot altogether avoid such sportsmen, to give them plenty of room, and to avoid, if possible, coming within range of their shot. There are also others who designedly kill game close to you, piquing themselves on the close shooting of their guns and the accuracy of their aim; but no sportsman with any experience, sense, or good feeling will be designedly guilty of so imprudent and improper an

act, as the best gun that ever was made will occasionally throw a few shot very wide of the main charge: of this fact I have witnessed very extraordinary instances, one of which occurred to myself. I had shot at and killed a snipe, which was at least twenty feet from the surface of the ground, when one shot entered the eye of one of my dogs standing about 15 or 20 yards to the right of the direction in which I shot: what caused the shot to go thus obliquely I cannot conjecture; the gun was a first-rate one, made by one of the best London makers.

I know also of two instances of gamekeepers receiving shot obliquely from the direction in which the main charge was sent, owing to game being shot at near to them. One man lost an eye, and the other carried the shot in his face as long as he lived, but without inconvenience. In cover close shooting is much more dangerous, as shot glance from trees to a considerable distance. I must also observe that independently of the uncertainty of the invariable close shooting of the best of guns, the best of shots will not always be certain of the steadiness of his hand; neither can he invariably rely on the precise sensitiveness of his finger, both being under the influence of the nervous system, and the latter being dependent on the immediate state of health at the time. I appeal to the experience of every old sportsman,

and I am convinced there is not one who will not readily admit, if he has constantly shot through all seasons, that occasionally he has pulled the trigger sooner than he intended, and that he has not invariably found that control over his trigger finger that he could have wished. If I mention these trifling circumstances, it is solely with a view of producing habits of carefulness, and thereby preventing the recurrence of painful accidents.

With regard to the locks of your gun you cannot be too particular in having them kept in good order. If not exposed to bad weather they will rarely require taking off; but in wet, damp weather they will need constant attention, wiping dry and clean, after which a *very* small portion of watchmaker's oil may be applied. Bad oil will do more harm than good, make them dirty, cake, and render their action unsafe: this I believe, as I have before intimated, is the fruitful source of accident.

There is another cause of accident, which, though of very rare occurrence, I *know* has been experienced. Many persons, after having loaded and put on their caps, then let down the cocks, so as to force the cap home, which is sometimes necessary when the caps are too small for the nipple. But even this simple operation requires care, especially when the caps are strongly made, as I have witnessed the cock being let down and relinquished under the impression of the cap

being driven home, when that was not the case, and the cap from its strength sustaining the cock for an instant, and then suddenly yielding and letting down the cock with sufficient force to cause the discharge of the gun. It will therefore be prudent to hold the cock firmly, and not relinquish it till you are certain the cap is close upon the nipple. There ought to be no necessity for this operation, as every sportsman ought to take care to have caps exactly suited to the nipple of his gun, in which case they can be fixed properly with the hand.

Keep your caps in a dry place in a tin box, and always immediately on returning home, remove them from your waistcoat pocket, and restore them to this receptacle, where they will become dry and fit for the next day's use, as they may have imbibed moisture from perspiration, in which case, had they remained in the waistcoat pocket, several miss-fires might have been the consequence. Keepers I have observed have frequent miss-fires, from neglect of this precaution.

HINTS ON CORRECT SHOOTING.

As every man who takes up a gun is anxious to make a good use of it, and all are not equally

successful, and some much disappointed when they fail, it may not be out of place to direct attention to a subject so interesting to sportsmen, and make some inquiries into the occasional causes of failure. When there is no apparent physical impediment, it seems strange that, when success is sought by frequent and persevering efforts, it should not be attained; still how many are there who have shot for years, and who, admitting the existence of no physical obstacle, yet remain bad shots, as stationary as many billiard players, who after twenty years' practice and experience play nearly as at first. The failure perhaps in both cases may be attributable to the commencement not having taken place under favourable auspices and on sound principles, as both require some preliminary instruction to ensure progressive success. If a man in the first instance be taught to stand in a good position, hold his cue correctly with one hand and place the other firmly, but not stiffly, on the table,—to handle his gun in a sportsmanlike manner,—he must advance in both; but if in either case the preliminary instructions be disregarded or neglected, and a start be made on false and erroneous principles, the odds will then be great against either progress or success.

But to succeed in either billiards or shooting,

the commencement ought to be early in life ; few who start late succeed in attaining more than mediocrity.

I place billiard playing in juxtaposition with shooting, because it depends equally upon the same physical qualities and upon the early exercise and practice of them ; and as it is important to success to maintain these in all their integrity, the golden rule of moderation must be observed in all things, as *all* excesses interfere with the economy of the stomach, and consequently, to a certain extent, impair both sight and nerve and unhinge the whole system ; hence the frequent inequality of the shooting of some good shots, who indulge too freely in the pleasures of the table : but over fatigue, too severe walking, and too great anxiety, will frequently be attended with the same unsatisfactory result.

I will now address myself to beginners, and endeavour to convey such suggestions as I believe, if attended to, may be serviceable.

A young gentleman who has never shot, after having been taught in the first instance by a competent person how to handle his gun, cock and uncock it with facility, firmness, and safety,—to bring it up in a sportsmanlike manner to his shoulder,—the necessity of carefulness in reference to loading and the safe method of carrying

the gun,—should then endeavour to bring it up to some object so as to cover it, and when he can do this with ease and accuracy, he may then attempt a few sitting shots at small birds, taking care to use small shot. When he succeeds in this respect I should recommend his going out with some friend who is a good shot, but without his gun, merely to observe how he kills his game in all the different positions in which it may present itself; how he manages the cross and side shots to the right and left. By devoting a few days to observation in this manner, he will be laying the foundation for more rapid progress than if he had shot for weeks alone, especially if his friend will explain certain shots to him. As a looker-on he will also perceive how little occasion there is for anything like haste or hurry, and not fail to remark the long interval which intervenes between the rising of a bird when near at hand, and its reaching the distance at which it ought to be shot: this will teach him the advantage of coolness and the impolicy of haste. After a week he may take his gun out with his friend, but with no ammunition: let him merely try to cover his game on its rising, and when he thinks he can accomplish this, let his gun be loaded with powder only; and if it be observed that he shoots steadily with this, then let shot occasionally be put in, but without his knowing it, although of course

previously forewarned that he would be indulged with this experiment; and should this succeed, and the beginner shoot steadily and without impatience or hurry, then the shot may be continued; but if, on the contrary, hurry and want of coolness be exhibited, the shot must not be persevered in, nor again tried till the most perfect calm and *sang froid* be restored.

The very best shot I ever met with in my life, and by far the coolest, told me he was taught in this manner by his father, who was a first-rate sportsman. When confidence and coolness are acquired, further instructions may be conveyed as to side and cross shots: the principle once established, the distance at which you ought to shoot before game under different circumstances will soon be learnt from experience. When a bird is merely crossing at an ordinary pace, a foot before him will suffice; but when a pheasant, black game, or grouse is coming over your head at full flight, as the pace then is very rapid, the gun must be directed at least two or three feet a-head.

One of the principal reasons of that continuous bad shooting which characterises some sportsmen is to be found in their habit of merely shooting *at* their game; the consequence is, they never, except by mere accident, kill a cross shot. On some days when they get a number of straightforward shots, they are very successful, but when *

the majority of shots happen to be cross ones, they scarcely kill anything; and they cannot understand the reason, and merely tell you they are in bad shooting, or the gun does not suit them, as they thought they had covered every bird they had shot at. The habit of shooting well *before* game is easily acquired, if attempted early, and practice will soon make judgment correct in this respect. Where this principle is well understood and acted on, good shooting must be the result, provided there be no physical obstacle, and the necessary aids and appliances are not wanting, one of the most essential of which is a good and suitable gun.

In securing a first-rate gun there is no difficulty, as most of the London makers are equally good; but a gun may be first-rate and at the same time altogether unsuitable to the person using it, if he has given his orders indiscriminately, or taken any gun the gun-maker may have thought proper to recommend. A good and experienced shot may shoot well with any good gun, whatever its peculiar make may be, but he will shoot better with one that exactly suits him, especially in quick shooting in cover; it is therefore essential, in the first place, to ascertain the form and make of gun you require, and give your orders accordingly; and one of the most important features in a gun, as to your advantageous management of it, is the

length of the stock between the trigger and heel plate, which has more influence on correct shooting than any other circumstance, especially if the gun be a heavy one. The requisite interval will depend upon the length of your arms—if these be short, the interval should be 14 inches to $14\frac{1}{2}$; for a person of middle stature, $14\frac{1}{2}$ inches; and for a tall person with long arms, $14\frac{3}{4}$ to 15 inches. If a person with long arms were to use a heavy gun with the interval of only 14 inches between the trigger and heel plate, however good a shot he might be, he would find himself seriously disappointed, especially in snipe shooting, as the gun would scarcely ever come up to the object on his first bringing it to his shoulder, and he would constantly shoot under rising birds, particularly cocks. Let those who are sceptical on this point try the experiment, and I believe they will find my theory correct: even an eighth of an inch makes a wonderful difference in this respect.

The next consideration is the bend or inflection of the stock, and this will be in proportion to the length of the neck; a short neck requiring a straight stock. But the bend of the stock is not of so much consequence as its proper length; because if the bend were exactly what it ought to be, the gun would not come up properly, so as to cover at first sight the object to which you wished to direct it, if the stock were a quarter or half of

an inch too short. Having the bend and length of the stock all right, the next portions worthy of consideration are the locks, which are as important to good shooting as any other part of the gun, especially if you have several guns. With bad locks, or with locks of too great or of unequal strength, either by the main spring or sear spring being too powerful, or the incision in the tumbler being too deep, it is impossible to shoot well; and unless especial care be taken in giving precise orders in this particular, there may be great annoyance and disappointment. I invite attention to this point because I have not unfrequently met with guns made by first-rate makers signally deficient in this respect, although they were highly finished in every other particular; the fault having arisen solely from carelessness and inattention.

If your locks are of equal strength, and the stocks of the same length, the same force will be required to pull the trigger, and there will be no disappointment; but if your locks be unequal in strength in the different guns, the easier locks will go off before you are prepared, and the harder ones not till you have given a *second* pull, and the point of your gun be lowered, than which nothing is more vexatious; and as with a long stock the finger will come more readily and more heavily upon the trigger than with a short stock, it is of as much importance to have your stocks of

similar length as it is to have your locks of equal strength. The above statements being the result of long and frequent experience, I think will be found to be correct, and well worthy of attention.

I must not omit to mention that the bend of the stock is much more influenced by the direction which that part of it takes which lies between the locks and the tip, than by the slope of that part which is grasped by the right hand, lying between the locks and the heel plate; it is therefore of consequence that this should be attended to, inasmuch as the correct elevation of the point of the gun depends much on accuracy in this respect. All French guns, which are objectionable in every other point of view, relatively to ours, are unexceptionable in this particular. I have put many of them to my shoulder, and scarcely ever found one that did not come up well and cover the object to which it was directed. I never, however, fired a single shot with one during the many years I was in France, having a very strong, but I believe not unreasonable, prejudice against them, from my own personal knowledge of the numerous accidents which arrived at the commencement of every season, from the bursting of the barrels. However low in price a French gun may be, the stock is sure to be disfigured by some ornament or other; and those of a high price are covered with them, and

generally with a cheek plate; the *tout ensemble* of the finish and ornamental part being quite opposed, in every respect, to the simplicity and solidity which characterises English guns, and which is at the same time agreeable to English taste.

Independent of this, the average run of calibres is 17, 18, and 19; and there are some even smaller. Where guns are got up very cheap, as they are in the provincial towns in France, with this small calibre, the frequency of accidents I think is very intelligible, more especially when it is known that the French are very careless with their guns, and very negligent in cleaning them. The locks of the common guns are execrable; indeed the best of French locks that I have ever seen are very inferior to ours. I am, however, speaking of ten years ago, so that they may possibly have made progress since that period. A Frenchman who met me out shooting on one occasion observed my gun, which was of 12 calibre, his being about 18; he was perfectly astonished, and very facetiously observed: "Mais, mon ami, quand vous manquez avec un fusil comme cela, c'est, que vous vous trompez de paroisse."

I have made no remarks in this chapter respecting weight or calibre, those points being matters of taste and circumstance. The sizes I prefer are 12, 13, and 14; 14 for the commencement of the season, and 12 subsequently. The

calibre of 12 is a pleasanter gun to shoot with than 14, and will carry a larger charge without any recoil. Guns of 14 calibre are as hard shooting as those of any calibre, but very frequently recoil even with an ounce and a quarter of shot, and three drams of powder; in a 12 gun you may put $1\frac{1}{2}$ ounce of shot, and three drams and a quarter of powder. I, however, prefer increasing *only* the powder; but as the best of guns vary as to the charges they can best carry, the only way of ascertaining the correct charge is by experiments at a target, if you are very particular on this point.

SUGGESTIONS ON THE SHOOTING DRESS.

Dress, generally speaking, is so much a matter of caprice, and occasionally involves so much *amour-propre*, that it would be hazardous to give an opinion or offer advice on the subject. Almost every one is influenced by his own taste and fancy, occasionally assisted by the deferential suggestions of a confidential tailor, as to what is most suitable and becoming, what is fashionable and what is not so.

But as regards a shooting-dress the matter altogether changes its complexion, as it involves not

only considerations of suitableness, but also of comfort and health,—objects of far more importance than external appearance. The sort and quality of dress will depend upon the time of year in which its use is required, and the country in which it is intended to sport. If in Scotland, on the moors, great benefit will be derived from having the coat, waistcoat, and trousers of woollen, on account of frequent exposure to wet and damp in the shape of fogs, mists, and rain; and as during the same day the sportsman will be often subject to alternations of extreme heat and cold, as he ascends from the valleys to the tops of the mountains, he will be less likely to suffer from these sudden and frequent transitions, and less liable to be chilled in a woollen dress than in any other, and will feel less uncomfortable when wet through.

The difference between the degrees of temperature in a valley and on the top of a mountain in Scotland, even on a fine day, must be felt to be known and believed. The transition on a very warm day in August, as you reach the summit breathless in the pursuit of game, is trying to any constitution, but more especially to those of sportsmen who have just left London at the end of the season. The only way to guard against such prejudicial influences, to which all must be accessible under similar circumstances, is to be provided

with suitable clothing ; and none will answer this purpose so well as that which is woollen, and it can be had of any substance, thin and fine for the commencement of the season in August, and thicker as the year advances.

A double-breasted waistcoat will not be without its advantage, opening it as you ascend the mountain side, and closing it immediately you face the sharp and cutting breeze at the top. From this practice I have derived much comfort, and prevented myself from catching many a severe cold; the warmth is thus retained, and the perspiration not suddenly checked, as it might have been, had you encountered the icy cold wind without this protection to your chest — a part of the body, which is at all times very susceptible of cold, but under such circumstances, especially so.

Flannel waistcoats are so indispensable for health as well as comfort when taking strong exercise, especially in Scotland, that no sportsman should be so unwise as not to use them; woollen stockings are also equally necessary ; these also may be had fine for the commencement of the season, although I am convinced the fine ones will soon be relinquished for the thicker and warmer ones, as the water on the damp mosses in the morning, and also late in the day, is sufficiently cold to be disagreeable with thin stockings ; and the thick stockings possess an advantage besides

their warmth, in protecting the feet from being wrung or excoriated by the shooting boots, which is no uncommon occurrence at the beginning of the season, and to which you will be always subject with thin stockings, under strong made boots. The most comfortable boot for walking and fagging in upon the hills is the common "lace-up boot;" when you once become accustomed to it, you will wear no other. It must be made by a man experienced in making shooting boots, and I have always found country makers more "*au fait*" of this work than London makers, the price being about one-third of the London made ones. If they be well made, of good leather, and the tongue properly attached in the inside, they will keep out the water for a long time, especially if they be old and seasoned, and previously dressed with some of the mixture made according to any of the receipts which will follow this article.

No new boots will ever keep out the water; it is therefore advisable to have your shooting boots made in the summer, wear them if possible once or twice on a wet day, have them properly dried, then dressed and put away; they will then be in good order for the 12th August. After boots have become wet, they ought to be dried gradually in the open air, not by the fire, and when perfectly dry then dressed. Let your boots be made wide in the sole, so that your foot may have sufficient

room to expand, as it would be impossible to walk any distance without discomfort and pain with a narrow soled or tight fitting boot: be also particular as to length; the pain produced by too short a boot during a long day's fatigue would be almost beyond endurance. The fit over the instep may be exact, but not too tight.

If the small nails be of copper, the boots will be more durable, but the larger ones may be of iron, as it is absolutely necessary for safety to have large nails, both in the heel and the point of the boot, to prevent you from falling when passing over rocky places, with which almost every part of Scotland abounds. There is no security without them. I have occasionally had severe falls from the want of proper and sufficient nails in my boots, and therefore can speak feelingly on the subject; but this occurred only the first year of my visiting Scotland, for I subsequently never neglected this salutary precaution. The fall you receive is not an ordinary one, being amongst rocks, and as it generally happens on account of your feet slipping from under you, you may fall with your entire dead weight upon the edge of some rock, and may dislocate a joint, break a bone, or what is not uncommon, break the stock of your gun; or at all events receive a severe bruise or bruises. To save my gun on one occasion, on falling, I injured

my left hand so much that I could not use it for several days; this was entirely owing to my boots being without large nails; partly cloth, and partly leather with buttons, are sometimes used, but I do not think they answer so well as the common lace-up boot, as you cannot regulate the degree of tightness over the instep. A boot also made like an ordinary Wellington boot, only stronger and of thicker leather, is a very good boot for cover and "battu" shooting, but will not answer for the hills, or for any hard work, as wrinkles are invariably formed in the instep, seriously interfering with your comfort, producing tenderness, then soreness, and finally excoriation. When this happens with any boot, there is no remedy like diachylon plaster, put on warm and kept firmly on with the hand till it is well attached, in which case it will generally remain till the inconvenience be entirely removed.

Some persons are more liable than others to suffer from the pressure and friction of boots, especially in warm weather, at the commencement of the shooting season; I therefore recommend them to take a supply of this useful plaster with them. It is always advisable to apply moderately warm water to the feet after a day's shooting; some refrain from this comfortable practice, contending that it makes the feet tender

and more liable to excoriation. I have found the reverse to be the case, as the warm water, by removing incipient inflammation arising from friction, prevents that soreness which precedes excoriation, but, notwithstanding the warm water, sometimes the feet at the commencement of your taking strong exercise will become tender: under such circumstances, great relief will be derived from rubbing the feet well over in the morning, immediately before putting your stockings on, with either sweet oil, or with any kind of pomard; it will also operate as a preventive against excoriation.

To return from this digression on shooting boots to shooting garments. Having recommended woollen for the entire costume in Scotland, I must qualify such recommendation by restricting it merely to the moors, as it would be altogether unsuitable for cover shooting; and as there is as good cover shooting in Scotland as in England, and perhaps in many parts of it better, or containing a greater variety of game, I will make a few suggestions on the subject of winter costume. The objection to woollen for the winter is simply because it could not withstand the briars, brambles and blackthorn; in fact, in many covers a coat of woollen would be destroyed in one day, and trousers of the same material would share a similar fate: we must

therefore have recourse to something stronger, and that is to be found in velveteens, cords, and plushes, and fustians for coats, and moleskin and cord for trousers. Velveteen, I think, makes the most agreeable coat, and is not readily torn; it is, however, an uncomfortable one in wet weather, but covers ought then to be avoided, as they can yield neither enjoyment nor sport.

Any colour is preferable to black in velveteens, inasmuch as the black dye is prejudicial to the strength of the stuff, and moreover comes out when it is wet, which is decidedly an additional objection. If wear alone be consulted, there is nothing like plush for cover shooting, but this is rarely used in England, except by gamekeepers; I have seen it very commonly worn in France.

For trousers no material surpasses moleskin, if it be of first-rate quality; it will resist briars, furze, and blackthorn; in fact, no description of cover will tear it, and, after it has been once washed, it becomes soft, pliable, and most agreeable to wear. Cord also makes good trousers, but after it has been washed a few times is easily torn. Fustian and moleskin make good coats, as far as wear is concerned, but are disagreeable from their stiffness, and their appearance is also much against them. As far as colours are concerned for shooting coats, dark ones are no impediment to sport in covers, but on the moors, or

in field shooting, I am persuaded your chance of approach is considerably diminished by dark colours, late in the season when the birds are wild. In all sorts of stalking the colour of your dress is of the greatest importance ; but I reserve my remarks on this point, till I come to the subject of stalking.

RECEIPTS FOR DRESSING BOOTS.

FIRST RECEIPT.

One pint of boiled linseed oil, half a pound of mutton suet, six ounces of clean bees-wax, and four ounces of rosin, to be melted over the fire, and well mixed. This, while warm, not so hot as may burn the leather, to be rubbed well in with the hand, the boots being perfectly clean and dry ; the leather is left soft and pliant.

I have used this receipt for years, and prefer it to those which I subjoin, as it is more easily made. It is excellent as a preservative of the leather, and as good as any I have ever tried for keeping out the water. I extracted it, many years ago, from an American paper.

SECOND RECEIPT.

India rubber, cut fine . .	4 oz.
Spirits of turpentine . .	7 oz.
Bees-wax	2 oz.
Mutton suet	3 oz.
Linseed oil	$\frac{1}{2}$ pint.

Put the India rubber into a bottle with the spirits of turpentine; place it near the fire until dissolved, which may be three weeks; then add the other ingredients, they having been previously melted together over a slow fire. This must be well rubbed into the boots with a brush, the boots being perfectly dry and clean; twice a week will suffice, or once every third time after wearing them.

THIRD RECEIPT.

- 1 pint of linseed oil, boiled.
- 1 oz. of bees-wax.
- $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. of Burgundy pitch.
- 2 oz. of spirits of turpentine.

Melt the three first ingredients over a slow fire in an earthen pot; *after* taking off the fire, add the turpentine. Rub this mixture well into the boots with the hand for a quarter of an hour (but a soft-haired brush will do), either before the fire, or under a warm sun. In the first instance, let this

operation be performed three times, at intervals, before wearing the boots; subsequently once a week will suffice, or three times a fortnight.

FOURTH RECEIPT.

Two oz. of India rubber, cut into pieces and dissolved in one pint of spirits of turpentine, to which is to be added one pint of linseed oil, two ounces of bees-wax, two ounces of Burgundy pitch, one table-spoonful of Venice turpentine, a little white lead, and a little lamp-black. The latter articles must all be boiled together before they are mixed with the dissolved India rubber. The mixture to be rubbed into the boots with a soft-haired brush once a week.

GROUSE SHOOTING.

Grouse shooting has been called, and not inappropriately, the "fox-hunting" of shooting, as it is as far superior to every other kind of shooting, as fox-hunting is to every other description of hunting. There is an excitement and fascination peculiar to this sport, arising from the wildness and beauty of the scenery, valleys, dingles and

dells, encompassed by irregular, rugged, rocky, precipitous mountains, possessing every variety of shape, form, and altitude, occasionally enhanced by contiguous sea and fresh-water lochs; and if there be sterility and desolation, it is somewhat relieved by the numerous varieties of heather of different colour, shade, and hue, which luxuriate in every direction, on the tops, points, and sides of projecting rocks. This external and visible combination of circumstances produces a pleasing and agreeable sensation, which the monotonous, compact, and well-arranged fields of Norfolk and Suffolk can never afford, however well stocked with game they may be, besides offering a fine field for the display of the best qualities in the highest bred and best disciplined dogs, and putting the metal of the sportsman to the test; for to pursue this sport successfully, it is required not only to have first-rate dogs, but to be an indefatigable walker, and to be able to use the gun skilfully. There is no sport more fatiguing, when well followed up, especially as the season advances; but very few out of the large proportion who visit the Highlands for grouse shooting remain beyond three weeks or a month, and therefore the majority are not aware of the greater pleasure and stronger excitement which this sport affords in the months of October and November. Then, of course, the number of head

bagged will be very considerably reduced, but the superior quality and beauty of the birds, which are then in full feather, will more than make up for their reduced number, and being stronger and swifter on wing, and more difficult of access, are more worthy of the sportsman's labour, exertion and skill; while the wild and rapid manner in which they rise causes an additional emotion, considerably enhancing the pleasure of bringing them down.

At the beginning of the season grouse lie close, rise near, and are very easily shot, and if the weather be warm, as it very frequently is in August, the difficulty is to make them rise; but it sometimes happens, if the birds be forward and strong on wing, and the season wet, they are wild even at the commencement—but this is rare.

The best mode of proceeding is to commence at the early part of the day on the outside of the moors, and drive birds towards some favourite feeding-ground, leaving it quiet for the evening's sport, and if you are successful in this respect, you will have as much shooting as you can desire. On first-rate moors, at the beginning of the season, this plan is unnecessary, as birds are sufficiently thick everywhere not to render any deviation from the beat requisite, but as the season advances, it may be resorted to with great advantage. It is important, previous to com-

mencing operations, to direct your attention to the quarter from which the wind comes, and to regulate your movements so as not to drive the birds off the moors, as grouse, when disturbed, generally fly down wind, take long flights, and do not return, like partridges, the same evening, to the ground where they were bred, so that, if driven into an enemy's country, a serious loss may be the consequence.

If the wind comes from the north, it is advisable to go as far north-east or north-west as may be convenient, and beat the ground at right angles to the wind; by continuing to quarter the ground thus, you not only give the wind to the dogs, but drive the birds towards the centre of the ground. But all these movements are relative, and must depend upon the size and extent of the moors. On a very large and extensive moor, well supplied with grouse, attention to this suggestion may perhaps not be so necessary; but on a small circumscribed one, where it is important to husband the packs as much as possible, it cannot be disregarded or contravened with impunity. For instance, were you to commence beating the ground from the southern boundary, the wind blowing strong from the north, especially at an advanced period of the season, when the birds are wild and strong on wing, although you and the dogs might constantly advance, so as to ensure

your being between the game and the boundary, the packs, on being disturbed, would not be driven up wind, but would pass you on both sides down wind, and go off the ground, interfering with and marring both your immediate and prospective sport. Having remained in Scotland several winters, and shot on the moors till the end of the season, I can speak with some certainty on this point.

Dogs ought to be first-rate in every respect, otherwise you will have but little sport, particularly as the season advances.

Setters are peculiarly suitable for grouseing, as they can do more work, undergo more fatigue, resist cold and wet better than pointers, are scarcely ever footsore or lame, whereas high-bred pointers are easily chafed by the heather, and are liable to sore feet and lameness. In very hot sultry weather, perhaps, pointers have the advantage; but the weather of late years has very rarely been such as would in any way interfere with the working of setters upon the moors, in addition to there always being water at hand for them to drink when thirsty, there being no lack of either springs or burns; however, where a large kennel is kept, a mixture of pointers and setters will be found most advantageous.

Most young sportsmen are anxious to be out at daybreak, and in hot, sultry weather, it may

not perhaps be a bad plan to shoot during the morning and afternoon, and rest a little in the middle of the day, but, generally speaking, it will be found more agreeable, and more conducive to sport, not to commence too early. During a long experience, I have never found that much was to be done very early in the morning. If you take your breakfast before starting, and are on your ground by eight, or even nine o'clock, you will have quite sufficient time, between those hours and six or seven in the afternoon, to kill abundance of game, and you will have better sport and more enjoyment than if you had commenced as soon as it was light. There are two reasons which induce me to recommend eight or nine o'clock as the time for commencing operations, rather than at daybreak: in the first place, by allowing the grouse to remain undisturbed during their feeding-time in the morning, they will lie much better during the day; and, in the next place, you will escape that disagreeable sensation of languor, and subsequent fatigue, which invariably assails every man who rises many hours before his usual time.

When grouse are wildest in the more advanced part of the season, they will also lie better in the afternoon, immediately after feeding, than at any other time of the day, and frequently more shots may be had from about sunset, as long as you

can see, than could have been obtained during the entire day; hence the policy of always leaving some good feeding-ground quiet till the afternoon; and some judgment must be exercised in determining the exact time of visiting the reserved ground, as half an hour too early might defeat your plans; and this is applicable in some degree to the morning, in the early part of the season, as by disturbing birds too early, before they have finished feeding, you sometimes make them wild and unsettled during the day.

In making the above observations, I am, of course, assuming that, previous to your commencing operations on the 12th, the keepers are possessed of every information respecting the places where the broods of grouse have been hatched; and, if they have done their duty during the summer months, they ought not to be at fault in this respect, especially if they have acted judiciously by cultivating a friendly alliance with the shepherds, as without their aid, assistance, and good offices, all efforts at preservation would be abortive. The shepherds being on the ground at all seasons, and in all weathers, know not only all the places resorted to by the birds, the spots where the packs are bred, but also can give the earliest and best information as to the encroachment of poachers or appearance of vermin. The nests are also almost entirely in their power, and

at their disposal, to be either protected or destroyed, as they may be conciliated or the reverse; it is therefore most important to make friends of those men, and this should be done immediately on a moor being taken, by promising each shepherd a reward at the commencement of the season, on the condition of his affording every protection to the game in his power. I would rather have the shepherds friendly, without one keeper, than half a dozen of the best keepers, with the shepherds adverse. In some districts it is customary to give the shepherds one shilling per pack, but I do not think this is so good a plan as giving to each shepherd a fixed sum, whereby you avoid exciting jealousy, which might arise from giving one more than another; but this is merely a matter of opinion, and on this point each person will judge best for himself. I have known both plans adopted with success. Some think so much per pack preferable, inasmuch as it operates as a stimulus to greater care and attention, and is likely to be a more just reward, being apparently proportioned to their trouble and vigilance, and that an inequality of rewards arising from this cause, produces rather a useful and advantageous stimulus than otherwise; but under any circumstances, it is both easy, just, and politic, to give an extra reward when extra zeal has been evinced, and satisfactory results produced.

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I must now return from this, I trust, not altogether unprofitable digression, to my relinquished ground in the pursuit of grouse, as this part of the subject merits a few observations.

In the early part of the season, grouse take short flights and may easily be marked down, and even if not marked down, may be found again by following the line of their flight, till you reach the first turn in the mountain, within a hundred yards of which they will probably have dropped, near the top; if not there, you must try every adjacent corner and bend in the ground. They rarely drop on a flat, except it be a very extensive one, or on the summit of the mountain, except it be after having turned some corner: it is always as well to be prepared when you come in sight, by making your appearance over a top or round a side of the hill, as there is no bird more quickly on wing and instantaneously off than a grouse. Sometimes they are very difficult to be found a second time, and baffle the utmost industry and perseverance. I have often been puzzled and unsuccessful, when I expected to have found them immediately, but the fact is they are very unequal in their flight, and sometimes go very great distances, and at others drop almost immediately on turning the first corner; in this respect much will depend upon the nature of the ground, independently of the weather. When the flats are extensive and the

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hills few, but large and lofty, I have generally found that grouse took very long flights, and became wild early in the season, especially if the flats be wet and spongy; but on the ground where the hills are small but numerous, and the flats restricted and dry, I have found grouse lie well constantly throughout the season, on fine and suitable days.

In wet weather grouse are equally wild everywhere, and I have always considered it worse than useless to go out in wet, bad weather, as you not only disturb your ground without the chance of sport, but make your birds wild for a future day. In a very hilly country grouse take very small flights, but as there are so many corners round which they may have turned and dropped, the sportman's patience and perseverance are frequently put severely to the test, before he finds the objects of his search. On many moors where grouse are very abundant, following packs is not resorted to, you merely pursue the beat previously fixed by the keeper, and have abundant sport; but as the season advances I am persuaded the most successful mode of proceeding is to follow your game, especially when it is marked down, even though a single bird, and on no account to relinquish the pursuit of a wounded bird so long as there is a chance of finding him. For your trouble and perseverance in this respect you will generally

be well rewarded, in getting numerous unexpected shots, in addition to securing your wounded bird, and experience the satisfaction of having acted in a sportsmanlike manner. The same chances in your favour result from following packs, as should you not succeed in breaking and dispersing the pack you are in pursuit of, you may find other birds; but in the event of success, you may secure every bird in the pack, especially if you have the good fortune to kill the old cock at the commencement, and this you ought always endeavour to do "per fas aut nefas," as he will frequently show his head above the heather (as he is running off, with a view of leading you away from the young birds). If you avail yourself of this opportunity, you may secure the remainder of the pack, whereas had you allowed him to escape, you might not have seen either him or the pack again during the day, or if you had, it would have been only after considerable trouble and extra walking.

On a dry, frosty day, especially if the frost be a black one and the sun be out, wonderful sport may be had, as many packs and single birds will be found to lie as well as at the commencement of the season. The more frequently the beat can be changed the better; twice a week is sufficiently often to go over the same ground, as grouse become not only very wild if constantly disturbed, but will leave their ground.

With regard to lunch, some biscuits and sandwiches ought to suffice, with cold tea or wine and water for liquid. Spirits of all sorts ought to be scrupulously avoided, especially the raw Highland whisky, than which no liquid is more unwholesome and prejudicial, especially if you are desirous of shooting well, and of not producing a feverish, unquenchable thirst, which no amount of liquid can either satisfy or allay. "*Obsta principiis*;" resist the first inducement which presents itself in the shape of a clear rivulet or cool spring, and you may then be able to persevere till lunch-time; but if, on the other hand, you yield to the first temptation, and only merely "take the chill off," with cold water and a little whisky, you will then be obliged to persevere throughout the day, as thirst under such circumstances and influences "*vires acquirit eundo*," and, if indulged, will not only produce discomfort but eventually bad shooting. Sometimes even bad shots shoot well under the temporary influence of a powerful stimulant, but when the reaction takes place there is generally a lamentable falling off, and this is too frequently the case, even with good shots, and the principle is applicable not only to one day but to continuous subsequent shooting.

BLACK GAME.

Black game is very inferior to grouse shooting, and only affords a few days' first-rate sport, as there are few districts which admit of its being followed continuously except as subsidiary to other shooting; it varies much according to the nature of the country, success depending more on a favourable disposition of the ground than on the quantity of the game. If there be high mountains contiguous to the ground where black game are bred, your sport will be of short continuance, as on being disturbed and shot at a few times, they take up their abode on the tops of the mountains, soon congregate, and become very difficult of access, except by stalking at daybreak and at sunset, when they descend to the corn-fields; but if there be no high mountains, and the country be merely hilly, with a few small covers and brushwood, then sport may be had to a certain extent on every fine day till the end of the season. In August, before they have been disturbed, they will be found on the open heather, generally in the bottoms, where there is a mixture of rushes, these being favourite breeding places, or in the brushwood or thick heather contiguous to the oat-fields, and they lie so close, that with a good dog you may frequently kill every bird in the pack: the old hen

is almost always found with the young birds, and is generally the first to rise. After a few days, most of the broods leave the open heather and descend to the immediate vicinity of the oat-fields, especially if the oats are ripe, attracted thither from a distance of many miles, and frequently crossing an arm of the sea or wide water loch of more than a mile in breadth. So long as the corn remains standing, or is in stook, *i.e.* in sheaves, black game may be found in the adjacent covers, and be easily approached; but after the corn is carried, they become more wary, roam about, are more dispersed, and are more difficult of access; it will be then necessary to exercise caution in approaching them, and to advance as quietly and carefully as possible.

One dog will suffice, and he ought to be remarkably good and staunch — an old, close-hunting pointer, who will not go out of gun-shot, and a good retriever will be all that you will require. Avoid speaking to, or calling your dog, or whistling, as any of these operations will disturb black game more than firing your gun off. At this period of the season two or three brace of black game must be considered a good days' sport — of course in addition to what other game you may meet with to fill up the bag — and this quantity may be secured on every fine day with good management till the end of October, and occasionally in

November on a fine, dry, frosty day. It is worse than useless going out on a wet or bad day, especially if the wind be high, as you will not only have no sport, but diminish your chance of success for the next favourable day. Avoid as much as possible going down wind when you are approaching any favourite spots: attention to this I have found from experience to be important.

You must be provided with a good strong hard-shooting gun, as the black cock, when in full feather, is difficult to be brought down except at a moderate distance, his feathers being thick and close, and his bones strong. No. 3. or 4., I think, will be found necessary at this period; at the commencement of the season No. 7. or 6. are large enough.

A great quantity of black game may be killed by stalking morning and evening before the oats are carried, and as the seasons are generally late in Scotland, the stooks, *i.e.* sheaves, sometimes remain out till the middle of October; upon and about these, black game may be seen in abundance, two or three may sometimes be killed at a shot, provided the field is so situated that you may approach unseen under cover of some rock or other inequality of ground. But I prefer the legitimate and more sportsmanlike mode of killing them, which may always be pursued on a fine day with success with a good dog, if there be cover

of any description contiguous, capable of affording them temporary shelter — long grass or fern will sometimes suffice, if the day be fine and dry; of course you cannot kill so many as by stalking, especially of the old cocks, but they occasionally lie close, and are sometimes taken by surprise. The young birds, when isolated, will generally lie to a point throughout the season, when found either in thick heather or in brushwood; but generally speaking, after the first month black game pack, and when one rises the rest follow; but as in covers they are sometimes dispersed, it is always a good plan, when you see one bird rise out of shot, to advance as speedily as possible, in case there should be others not far distant. In large covers, if there be a party, the guns may be distributed and the birds driven by beaters to one point; this expedient I have known resorted to with great success: those guns which are forward must keep well out of sight, as the old birds rise very high, as soon as they perceive any one standing in the line of their intended flight.

At the beginning of the season black game cannot easily be driven out of a cover by beaters without the assistance of one or two dogs, as they will lie till they are almost trod upon. The best dogs for this purpose are close-hunting, steady, mute spaniels; they will be sure to find every head of game in the cover; but they must be well under com-

mand, and broken from chasing, otherwise they will do more harm than good. In the first month of black game shooting I have had better sport with spaniels than I have ever had with either pointers or setters ; the latter cannot find half the birds in very warm, sunny weather, especially when they drop in thick brambles and bushes, and spaniels will find every single bird. It is of course indispensable that your spaniels down charge, but as they will frequently flush several birds when a number are found together, before they perform this act of obedience, several shots may be lost, which would not have been the case with pointers ; they will however very soon repair this temporary disappointment, by finding all the birds again, if you can mark them down, no matter where they may drop, where pointers or setters would have failed.

Some patience is requisite with spaniels ; they must not be hurried, and not only be allowed time to hunt their ground closely, but encouraged to do so ; it will be necessary for the sportsman to be vigilant, and have his eye continually on them, so as to know immediately when they come on game, and keep up with them as they advance. It is a little more fatiguing, and at the same time more exciting than with pointers ; but you get a great many more shots, although many of them may be at a greater distance and

more difficult. I am however persuaded that the man who is active, a keen sportsman and a good shot, will kill one-third more with spaniels than with pointers during the first month; in fact, so long as black game lie well: the reverse will be the case as soon as they become wild and difficult of access; the bustling spaniel must then be discarded, and the steady pointer adopted — but even the pointer must not be allowed to go out of gun shot. Always avoid as much as possible showing yourself on the tops or on any rising ground unless you have previously beaten the ground below which the tops command, as those birds which are on the look out would instantly perceive you, and immediately move off. Invariably advance towards any favorite spots from below, and never from above, always going round any elevated ground rather than over it.

PTARMIGAN SHOOTING.

Ptarmigan give little or no sport, and are generally, I should imagine, pursued more as a matter of curiosity than for sport. For the table, they are considered very inferior to grouse. They are only to be found on very high, rocky moun-

tains, near the top, are generally very tame, and will allow you to get sufficiently near to have one shot setting and another as they take their flight from the ledge of the rocks on which you will find them perched. As their colour so nearly resembles that of the rocks, or large stones, on which they are sitting, they are not so readily seen as might be expected, although within the ordinary range of sight. A sitting shot is frequently the only chance that presents itself, as they may be out of sight the moment they leave the edge of the rock on which you may perceive them; they, however, fly but short distances, so that by following them up, if there be any quantity on the mountain, you may fill your game-bag; but you will find it rather hard work, as these birds never leave the rocky part of the mountain, and the walking will necessarily be very rough and bad, and you must make up your mind to a fall or two.

I recollect, some few years ago, when in Invernesshire, accompanying some friends to a high mountain expressly for the purpose of shooting ptarmigan. It was in the month of September; the morning was very fine. As we were on ground abounding with game, we killed grouse and black game before reaching the mountain, and saw several roebuck; but as a climax to this commencement, on arriving at the base of the mountain, we

saw five large red deer taking their departure, and winding their way round the side of the mountain, and immediately above them two immense eagles hovering; but they soon disappeared with the deer, and we commenced our ascent, by no means an easy task, difficulties increasing with our progress. It really appeared an endless job, what with the acclivity and the height, which was so very much beyond what we expected from our estimate of the distance at first sight. In fact, the surface of a high mountain is as deceptive as that of a large water-dock, when you look at it from the shore, and try it afterwards with a pair of oars. We, however, accomplished our task by reaching the summit, and very soon found some ptarmigan; but we had no sooner commenced shooting than a thick mist came on, immediately succeeded by a most copious fall of rain, so that we could only kill a few brace, and before we could reach the bottom, and get access to our Mackintoshes, which we had left there with our ponies and game baskets, we were well soaked; but this was a very common occurrence, almost a daily one, as it rained almost every day, and the finest and most cloudless morning was no guarantee for the remainder of the day being fine.

A singular circumstance occurred on our reaching our game baskets, rather reversing the spirit of the old adage, "Catch a weasel asleep." The game

paniers had been removed from the poneys' backs and placed on the ground, so as to allow the poneys to feed at liberty till our return. One of the gillies, on replacing his panier, happened to raise the lid, and discovered that a weasel, attracted no doubt by the savoury smell of the grouse, had managed to raise the lid and get into the basket, without being able to effect his escape. His fate was of course, immediately on our return home, decided by the terriers — so much for the termination of this day's sport.

PARTRIDGE SHOOTING.

After grouse shooting, the pursuit of partridges becomes very tame work, more especially in those counties in England where these birds abound to such an extent, that one large turnip field will furnish a day's sport to a party of six or more guns, the surrounding stubbles having been previously driven for this purpose. Boys, or a man on a pony, with a brace of wild spaniels, may be employed. I have known as many as eighty brace of partridges killed in one turnip-field in this

manner, the field being extensive and the turnips close and thick, and the day exactly suitable. There were six guns; no dogs except one or two retrievers. The field was walked over or beaten three times during the day. After the second beat the party took lunch; the last beat was the most productive. The guns were at regular distances from each other, keepers and game carriers walking between them. The success of this sort of shooting depends upon method, regularity and order. The line must be rigidly kept, and after the discharge of even one shot, the party must halt until the gun be reloaded, and when "all right" is pronounced, they may advance, the keepers picking up the birds as they proceed. Many running birds will always escape during the day's shooting, where the turnips are very thick, and the ground much soiled by game, defying the sagacity of the best of retrievers; but on the following day the greater part may be recovered.

This sport is generally commenced between 10 and 11 o'clock, it being found, as in grouse shooting, adverse to good and successful sport to disturb the birds before they have finished feeding, and the dew be off. And, moreover, between the hours of 10 and 6, there is abundance of time to satisfy any reasonable appetite for shooting, and to make an excellent bag. If the day be fine and dry, the dew off, and you use dogs, the birds,

when found and shot at in the stubbles, will immediately fly to and drop in the first thick piece of clover or turnips, or thick hedgerow, whereas, had you found them at daybreak, they would have dropped in some bare place and taken a second flight.

It is difficult to give precise instructions as to partridge shooting, as they of necessity must be relative to the country in which it is pursued. In Suffolk and Norfolk, where partridges are most numerous, and turnip-fields abound, it may be pursued without the use of either pointer or setter, merely by having the stubbles driven; but, to my taste, shooting loses the greater part of its charm without the use of dogs; however, "*de gustibus non est disputandum.*" It must, however, on the other hand, be admitted, that to those who are fond of having a number of shots, without much fatigue, and are indifferent as to using dogs, that there are no counties like Suffolk and Norfolk for this description of shooting. One hundred and ten brace of partridges, I believe, were once killed by one gun in one day, the point to be decided by 100 brace. I do not know whether there was a wager or not; I think there was. The ground selected was the best in the county, and the shot, Sir R. S., admitted to be first-rate. The day was fine, and the task easily accomplished. The birds were driven continuously

through the day into turnip-fields. Several guns were employed, and a loaded one always in readiness, so that no chance was lost. So much for what can be performed in Suffolk and Norfolk.

The contiguous county, Cambridgeshire, is almost as good. From Newmarket to Thetford, there is a vast extent of country abounding in game, and particularly partridges, the soil being exactly suitable for breeding, and also abundant in every variety of food, and birds are so numerous, that the only difficulty is to keep them down by fair shooting; but all counties are not so fortunate in this respect, and the difficulty in too many is the other way, in which case the sportsman must be satisfied with a few brace, and, to obtain them, have good dogs, be an excellent walker, good shot, and skilful in his tactics. But I am inclined to believe that the man who can kill with a brace of good dogs his twelve or fifteen brace over a wild, unpreserved country, will enjoy his sport much more, in the variety afforded him by the different sort of ground which he will go over, the excitement and pleasure he will experience, when his dogs make their first point at a long-searched-for covey, and as they subsequently draw after single dispersed birds, than he who can kill double, or even treble the quantity, without the aid of any dog, or without going out of one turnip-field.

In a wild country, where birds are scarce, the first difficulty is to find the covey. The primary object, when you have succeeded in this respect, ought to be to kill the old birds, and drive the others in the direction of some good lying, such as clover, turnips, furze, or whatever the contiguous land may afford in the shape of cover; if your dogs are good, and you manage well, you ought to get the greater part of the covey; if, however, you are shooting over ground where birds are scarce, and you are desirous of increasing your stock, never on any account kill any covey down, always leave at least four birds.

In partridge shooting, always give your dogs the wind as much as possible, and as this principle is important as to the success of your day's sport, it ought to be attended to in the morning before starting, so as to regulate your beat during the day; a great deal frequently depends upon your entering a field from the right quarter; a good marker is very requisite, two if you can have them, as single birds at the beginning of the season lie very close, and are easily passed by the best of dogs. The best shot is No. 7., to commence with, and, as the season advances, No. 6., but never larger—some use 5., and even 4., which in my opinion is a very great mistake; you will wound and destroy more birds with large shot, but you will bag more with small without wound-

ing others, and be more satisfied with your shooting.

Partridges are a very easy bird to kill, compared with grouse, their flight being steady and regular ; if a covey rises within tolerable distance, there is always time for the effective discharge of both your barrels without any hurry ; in fact, at the commencement of the season birds rise so very close, that you are obliged to wait till they are at a proper distance ; nothing, in my opinion, is more unsportsmanlike than to kill your birds too close, so that they are not fit to be carried home.

When birds are going straight away from you, they are generally on the rise, especially if they are approaching a hedge, therefore take good care not to shoot under, and when you have a cross shot, shoot at least a foot before your bird. With hares you must adopt the same plan, always shooting well before them. As the season advances, and birds become strong on wing, and difficult of access, always follow your birds, and endeavour to break your coveys, by which means you will be more likely to have sport than if you went continually in pursuit of fresh coveys. I have shot much in wild countries where birds were not over plentiful, and I always made it a rule to follow birds as long as I had a chance of finding them, and found this plan answer. When partridges are wildest they will generally lie close, if

you can disperse them and drive them into cover. I have even known them lie till nearly trod upon in a rough fallow. If a large covey rises at a distance off a bare place, when the season is advanced, it is sometimes good policy to fire at them, although out of shot, as if not shot at, they will in all probability drop on a bare place, commence running, and, as you approach, get up a second time out of distance, whereas had you fired a shot, they would have dropped in cover of some sort, and allowed you to get tolerably near them, when you would do well to fire both barrels if you have the slightest chance, as after this they will be sure to lie better.

On a dry day, with a slight breeze, even in December, a good shot, and good walker, who will persevere and follow up his birds in a country where there is any tolerable cover, either in the shape of turnips, furze-fields, or hedge-rows, will be certain of sport; whereas few shots could be had by not deviating from your beat, and continually advancing in pursuit of fresh coveys.

In all parts of Scotland, where I have found partridges, I have remarked that they are very easily killed, especially those found contiguous to heather; they fly short distances, and, from the country being open, are easily marked; and as there is always cover to invite them to drop in, they are sure to lie close, and it only requires

the forbearance of the sportsman not to kill the coveys down. The birds are generally not so large as the English birds, but of much better flavour.

I must not omit all mention of the red-legged partridge, which is to be found in Suffolk and Norfolk, and on other light soils; I believe this bird came originally from France. It also belongs to Spain. It is sometimes called, "French partridge," and believed by many to be the partridge peculiar to France; but this is a great mistake, as it only belongs to certain parts of France, the ordinary English partridge being the prevalent bird; in fact, between Calais and Paris, only the ordinary partridge is to be found, with the exception of a casual covey. In Brittany, where a great deal of buck wheat is produced, red-legged partridges are numerous, and also in the south of France, among the vines. This bird, although a much larger and handsomer bird than the ordinary one, is of very inferior quality; in fact, I think, disagreeable in flavour, being sweet. The flesh is very white; and as regards sport, this bird is adverse to it, and anything but an acquisition to either Suffolk or Norfolk. I have had many a good day's sport spoiled by them, and I believe most landed proprietors are not only tired of them, but consider them a great nuisance. These birds are always on the move, either flying

or running; and when the common partridge is disposed to lie close, these birds disturb them, by either running amongst them, or flying over them, calling at the same time. I recollect, some years since, when shooting in Suffolk, having driven from 50 to 100 brace of the common partridge into some long, rough, shaggy grass, I thought I was going to have some wonderful sport, and get rid of all my ammunition, as the birds were dispersed, and dropped in twos and threes, this favourable disposition of circumstances being the result of some previous hard walking,—when a few straggling red-legged rascals rose, some of them flying over the grass, quite low, and calling, others partly flying and running, so that by the time I had reached the spot where I intended to have done so much execution, not a single bird was left: they had all taken flight, in company with the red legs, over a bare, open country.

In addition to this nuisance, they spoil all dogs, by their continual running when you find them either in turnips or heather. They are certainly a fine bird to shoot at, when you can surprise them, either in heather or brushwood, or turnips, but this is not often the case. The disadvantages of having this bird on an estate are so numerous, that it has always been surprising to me that any sportsman should allow them to remain, the only thing in their favour being their appearance. The only

way to get rid of these birds is to destroy them and their nest during the breeding season.

No game is more easily preserved, and the stock of them more readily increased, than partridges, where the soil is suitable. Two years' forbearance, with care, will easily get up a good head, if only a few coveys be left, as partridges generally have from 14 to 18 eggs, and sometimes, though rarely, as many as 20; there is, however, frequently one bad egg, and one or two birds may die young, especially if the season be unfavourable, so that from 14 to 16 birds, on the 1st, may be considered a good covey.

If all your young birds be left, you cannot calculate upon a covey for each brace, as there are always more cocks than hens; but the increase under two years' forbearance, and moderate shooting on the third year, will be found to be very great, of course every precaution having been taken to destroy vermin, and counteract poaching. Directions as to the former I have given in another chapter; and as to the latter, if you suspect netting, it will be necessary to have all your fields in which you think a net could be used, where birds jug, staked with blackthorn, at such intervals as will prevent a net being used. This precaution ought be taken immediately after the harvest. In the winter, when snow is on the ground, the keeper will of course keep a good look-out.

REARING PARTRIDGES FROM EGGS.

If you can get eggs, partridges are easily raised under hens. A particular sort of hen (the bantam) has been specially recommended, but I have found the ordinary one answer every purpose. Having a number of these at your disposal in the different farmyards in the neighbourhood, the partridges' eggs must be placed under them when they are sitting, and their own eggs withdrawn, and this can be easily done, without in the slightest degree alarming the hens, by the farm-servant who is in the habit of attending upon and feeding the poultry. Whenever the bird leaves the nest, a few days before hatching, it will be as well to sprinkle warm milk-and-water on the eggs. As soon as the birds are hatched, or perhaps on the following day, if it can be conveniently postponed, as the young birds do not partake of any food under twenty-four hours, but derive all their support from the warmth imparted under the wings of the mother, they must be placed under a coop, with the old bird: this coop must have been constructed expressly, having a bottom to it, and small intervals in front through which the young birds can pass; to this, however, there must be a second coop attached, with open work, covered with netting, affording space for them to

run about. After a few days, when the young birds become accustomed to the spot, the netting from the outer coop may be removed during the day, but replaced at night as a protection from vermin. The best place to have your coops is in an old kitchen-garden, walled in, as in this they will be more secure, and finding plenty of food, more readily learn to take care of themselves. In the first instance, you must feed them with eggs boiled hard, chopped up with cress, and with an abundant supply of ants' eggs: the latter is the best food you can give them.

Select a good aspect for your coops, so that the birds may have the benefit of the morning and mid-day sun, and be sheltered from the north winds. The young birds require great attention, and must be fed regularly three or four times a-day: each bird will require about one egg daily. If the weather be wet and cold, they will be very liable to a disease called the pip, and will require extra care and immediate attention, as they soon succumb to the first attacks of the malady if it be not counteracted, and these exhibit themselves by the bird's gasping for breath as if he were nearly suffocated, accompanied by weakness, so that in attempting to walk he falls down. Something of a stimulating character I have known afford instant relief and save the bird: three-fourths black pepper and one-fourth mustard, mixed

together with a little butter, and made into small pills, and one pill given daily to each bird. Even if the birds be quite well, but the weather wet, one of these pills given on alternate days will be beneficial, acting as a preventive. It will be much better to have the coops upon some gravelly ground than upon turf; if near to some groundsil and lettuce so much the better. Pheasants can be reared in the same manner. Curds are also a good and safe food for young birds, but the staple food must be ants' eggs.

Young pheasants are also subject to a disease called the gapes; this may be cured by the same remedy as the pip. The coops of both partridge and pheasant ought to be moved every morning; if they be placed on the grass, it ought to be mowed short, and they ought not to be let out of their coops till the dew be off. Little heaps of gravel should be made for them to roll themselves in. No water should be given till they are a month old, and then some saffron must always be put in it. As the birds become strong, boiled rice may be given in addition to their other food, especially if it be observed that they have diarrhoea, to which they are sometimes subject. Should rice fail in stopping it, some alum may be boiled with it. Should it not be possible to procure a sufficient supply of ants' eggs, then maggots, or the larvæ of wasps, may be used. The

former may be procured from horse-flesh or bullock's liver, hung up in a warm place, under trees, with a tub underneath, with bran in it, to receive them. The larvæ, if not wanted for immediate use, must be baked, to keep them serviceable, and prevent their arriving at maturity.

PHEASANT SHOOTING.

In former days, when game was not so abundant, nor so highly preserved as at the present time, spaniels were generally in use for pheasant shooting; and in a country where the fields were small, and surrounded by thick hedgerows and shaws, spaniels afforded excellent sport, particularly to two guns, one being on either side of the fence, especially where there was a mixture of game. With two brace of good spaniels, and one good beater, the widest hedgerow or shaw will be thoroughly ransacked, and every head of game forced out either on one side or the other; and as these lively and excitable little dogs are bustling about and giving tongue, the sportsman is kept in a continual state of pleasurable excitement, as to what kind of game is to succeed that which has just made its appearance; and as all sorts of game resort to hedge-

rows and shaws, they become a sort of sporting lottery, from which, in addition to pheasants, partridges, hares, and rabbits, an extra and unexpected prize, in the shape of a woodcock, may frequently be secured. In fact, in the winter, when the leaf is off, I don't know of prettier or more amusing sport than hedgerow and shaw shooting, with two brace of spaniels and a brother sportsman, in a country not overstocked with game, but where there is a slight sprinkling of everything, so that, with good shooting and a little fagging, a tolerable bag may be made. But this sort of old-fashioned shooting, which I partook of constantly in my younger days, and remember with pleasure, is now superseded by a different style of proceeding, consequent on the new and extensive system of preservation of game, but especially of pheasants.

In former days, if two guns killed their five or six brace of pheasants, with a mixture of partridges, hares, rabbits, and two or three woodcocks, the sport was considered most satisfactory; but now pheasants are all reserved for one or two great days, and if two or three hundred are not killed, "the battue" is thought nothing of; hence the number of pheasants, with loads of other game, sufficient for a winter's sport for two or three guns, that is sacrificed to the gratification of having one or two great days: and this vast slaughter is committed without the aid of any dogs, beyond,

perhaps, a brace of retrievers, to the very small gratification of any genuine sportsman. However, the good shots, when invited on these occasions, are generally forthcoming; it's a change, and the opportunity of exhibiting their skill is afforded.

The general mode of proceeding is to collect the best and most crack shots of the neighbourhood, bad shots being scrupulously avoided, as well as those who kill their game too near, and thereby render it unfit for the market, as these battues are generally a matter of business as well as pleasure. These being assembled, the covers are driven, by a number of men and boys, up to particular points, at which the guns are placed in line, and as there is generally a net round the cover, and in different directions through it, so as to divide the beats, with perhaps a small outlet to the last beat, the sport is tolerably divided, and shots are generally secured at all sorts of game which the cover affords, and immense slaughter effected.

Pheasants, from their indisposition to rise and their predisposition to run, generally proceed towards the guns so soon as the least noise takes place in cover; but few rise till they are driven into close quarters by the beaters, and compelled to take wing in self-defence. If there were no nets to stop them, almost every pheasant would run out of the cover, and few shots be had, as it is

a singular fact, that when pheasants reach a net which is only a yard high, instead of flying over it, as they might easily do, after having made a few fruitless attempts to get through it, they return towards the beaters. Some few of the old cocks, who have had the good fortune to survive a few "battues," hop over the nets with the agility of a greyhound, and make their escape as fast as their legs will carry them. Their fate is, however, very possibly merely postponed to the end of the day, when the "grand finale" takes place at some thick corner of the wood, with a deep ditch round it, into which these old fellows have skulked, with several of their equally old and cunning companions, to undergo their final ordeal, as there is generally some desperate work just at last.

Some, however, must escape, more birds frequently rising at the same time than can be shot at even by a dozen guns, and many escape during the loading, as on these occasions no man is allowed more than one gun, merely to obviate the danger which might arise from changing guns in the hurry of the moment. Many of these conclusions of a "battue" have often struck me as resembling the finale of the fireworks at Vauxhall. Sometimes, if there be a thick piece of turnips adjoining the cover, this will afford one excellent beat at the end of the day.

One gun may have an excellent day's sport with

one old steady pointer, on the day succeeding a battue, in the vicinity of the cover, if there be any good turnip fields or hedgerows. Those who have large preserves of pheasants object to their covers being beaten, or in any way disturbed, more than once or twice during the season, and hence the necessity of a "battue." There is some reason in this, as no bird is more easily disturbed than a pheasant, or who strays further without immediately returning, so that it would be a very losing game to disturb large covers frequently, merely for the sport of one or two guns; but still there are always parts in every cover, where a couple of guns, with one steady pointer, or with a good retriever without a pointer, might have sport without much disturbing the cover or driving the game away: but this will depend entirely on circumstances, and on the relative position of the cover.

If a cover be full of hares, and in the midst of an open country, where the tenants are allowed to keep greyhounds, and it be desirable to preserve the hares for particular occasions, such a cover cannot be kept too quiet, as it cannot be disturbed in the slightest degree with impunity. Hence the necessity of a good look-out, as in a coursing country tricks of all sorts are resorted to to make the hares leave the covers, in which case they make their forms on the fallows, stub-

bles, or elsewhere, according to the season of the year, and then are victimised by greyhounds ; but if hares leave a cover, pheasants do so much more readily, and stray to a greater distance, sometimes as far as two or three miles : some of them will of course return in a few days to the cover where they have been in the habit of being fed, if they have not gone into an enemy's country, and their return intercepted.

It is very easy, in a favourable country for pheasants, to raise a large stock of them ; but it is most difficult to keep them when you have got them, no bird being more easily poached, both by day and night ; and as there is no bird whose exact place of resort is more easily ascertained by the poacher, all the latter requires is a couple of hours unmolested by day to clear a large plantation : hence the necessity of unremitting vigilance. To keep a large stock of pheasants together, you must feed regularly and in particular spots. The poachers are aware of this, and are as watchful of the movements of the keepers as the latter are of them ; and when they learn that the keeper who has charge of a particular district is absent, they immediately repair to it, and commence their operations, one of which is called "hingling." If there are four men, they will, in a very short time, set two or three hundred snares at the end of a plantation, more or less, according to its

size, and to the quantity of pheasants they know to be there, and when these are set go round to the other end of the cover, and walk, at regular distances, slowly towards their snares, making a slight noise by cracking and breaking rotten branches, which will be quite sufficient to set all the pheasants in motion, and will be more effective than if they had a dog, as he would perhaps drive them too fast, and make them take wing. When the poachers reach the end of the cover, the pheasants are taken out of the snares and put into a sack, and the snares removed; they then proceed to another cover, if they think they have time, or move off, as circumstances may suggest. Perhaps they have a light cart waiting in the nearest road, ready to receive the spoil; if not, perhaps they conceal the sack till night-time, when one of the party comes and fetches it. Many covers are cleared in this manner without the knowledge of the keeper; and when the day arrives for the "grande battue," there is great disappointment, and the head keeper looks very foolish, not knowing how and when he was duped, although he cannot deny the fact.

I was once present when one of these "contre-temps" occurred; more than half the pheasants were gone, without any appearance of poaching having been visible, and a regular watch having been kept both night and day; and as a shot had

not been fired in the cover, the lost birds could only have been removed in the manner I have described, at some period of some day when the "looker-out" had been absent, which he did not choose to admit.

Some persons place what are called maroons in covers, across the different pathways, to give notice of any one moving through the covers. I don't know whether they answer generally or not, but I recollect they had been set in the cover to which I have just alluded, and the pheasants were gone notwithstanding, and without the cognisance of any of the keepers.

Poaching is also sometimes done in a small way by labourers on the land, by setting snares round the hedges; but these are soon detected if a keeper does his duty. Then comes the night-poaching, with guns, which is most difficult to counteract or prevent, as the men who are engaged in this nefarious practice are generally the most desperate characters, and fully prepared to shoot a keeper with as little hesitation as they would a pheasant, should any obstacle be opposed to their proceedings; and as they frequently muster in greater numbers than the collective force of the keepers, and as the latter are generally unarmed, except with staffs, the attempt to secure these ruffians is rarely successful, always most dangerous, and not unfrequently attended with loss of

life. If the keepers, under these circumstances, could identify the poachers, an important end would be answered; but this is generally most difficult, as the poachers frequently come from a distance, and are not known to the keepers, and, if known, take care to disguise themselves so as to avoid being recognised, and moreover generally threaten the lives of the keepers whenever they attempt to approach sufficiently near for the purpose. Only three years ago, a head keeper in Suffolk was shot at and killed by a poacher on merely attempting to identify him, without in the slightest degree, in any other respect, acting on the offensive; and, very unfortunately for the ends of justice, when the supposed delinquent was tried with those who were thought to be his companions, there was not sufficient legal evidence to convict any one of the miscreants, although there was no moral doubt either as to their identity or guilt.

Where pheasants are very thick, artificial ones, made of wood or straw, placed in the trees, will be useful in deceiving the poachers, and saving the lives of the birds. Sometimes pitfalls in covers if the fact of their being made be promulgated, will make poachers shy of entering a cover. Furze and broom make a capital cover for a pheasant preserve, only requiring a good look-out by day. The best food to attract pheasants, and keep them in one

spot, is buck wheat, white peas, damaged raisins, and boiled potatoes. It is also a very good plan to sow some sunflowers, if there are any favourable spots for the purpose, as they are much liked by pheasants.

SNIPE SHOOTING.

At the proper season of the year, when snipes are abundant and in good condition, they afford excellent sport; when out of condition they are sometimes as plentiful as at the height of the season, but only for a few days: they are then more difficult to kill, and show less sport, being wilder and less accessible, and more irregular in their flight. From the end of October till the end of January is their season. In November and December I have usually found them in the highest condition; but this will depend on the weather, as they are seldom plump and fat till after a few sharp frosts. In September and in March I have occasionally found them in great quantities; but in both these months they are thin and of indifferent flavour, especially in the month of March: they are then on their return passage to their native countries, and are not only thin, but have a strong, rank, disagreeable taste.

In speaking of snipe shooting, I allude to that which is had in large marshes and bogs (where fifty, sixty, and more shots may be had daily), and not to the casual shooting of a few in frosty weather by the brook or rivulet side; and having had much experience in this sort of shooting, and having killed many thousand snipes, I can speak with some degree of certainty on the subject. Ireland is celebrated for snipe shooting, snipes being very much more abundant there than in either England or in Scotland, twenty couple, and even more, being easily killed by one gun in a day. There are, however, fens in Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire where excellent sport is to be had; and in some parts of the west of Scotland snipes are also very plentiful, particularly in the Isle of Harris.

I have had tolerable snipe shooting in Dorsetshire, Cambridgeshire, and also in Scotland; but the best I ever had was in France, and there I followed it regularly and consecutively for seven or eight years, killing upon an average from four to five hundred couple a year. In the year 1828 I first commenced operations in France, and during that winter killed 1232 head of game more than 1000 of which were snipes, the remainder wildfowl. My head-quarters were at Montreuil (on the high road to Paris, about forty miles from Boulogne). In the immediate vicinity

of this place, I used to have very good shooting; but my best sport was obtained in a large marais, about eight miles distant, close by a village called Villeres. I also had very excellent sport in a marais at Nampont (this place is the first post on the road to Paris from Montreuil).

During the months of November and December, these two marais, on particular days, yielded first-rate sport; in fact, so long as there was no continuously severe frost, snipes were always to be found in tolerable abundance. The arrival of the first large flights generally occurred at the end of October or beginning of November; and on particular days subsequently, when the wind and weather were favourable, the quantity was considerably increased by further flights. If the wind were in the south-east at night, and remained there till morning, there was always a certainty of sport, more especially if the day were dull and damp—a fall of rain, with a slight breeze, was always in favour of sport.

On a very fine day, with sunshine, snipes always became scarce and wild. I have heard it asserted by some sportsmen that dogs are not necessary for snipe shooting—that they can walk them up; but this is a very great mistake, the very best of dogs being requisite, no birds lying closer than snipes on particular days, especially when they are in good condition: wounded birds

will frequently not rise till you almost tread upon them, if not found by the dog.

Setters make the best snipe dogs, pointers being too delicate to endure the continual exposure to wet. The former are very easily broken to snipes. As it is necessary invariably, when you can do so, to go down wind, you must teach your dogs to hunt at right angles to the wind (and they very readily acquire this mode of proceeding with proper management), so that immediately a point is made you can go down wind and head your dog, by which means you will not only get close to the bird before he rises, but have an easy side-shot, either to the left or right hand, as you please, by the direction you take when you get immediately opposite to your dog. As nineteen snipes out of twenty fly against the wind when flushed, they are indisposed to rise as you advance down wind upon them; whereas, were you to go up wind, they would rise at a long distance, and at the same time give you a comparatively difficult shot, and on particular days you would not in this way get near a single bird.

Snipes are generally supposed to be a difficult shot, and so they are if you go up wind to them; but the reverse will be the case if you proceed in the orthodox and sportsmanlike manner by going down wind; the bird will then fly slowly round you, and so far from there being any oc-

casion for hurry or quickness, patience will be required to allow the bird time to get at a sufficient distance before bringing your gun to the shoulder. Always take good care to shoot about a foot before your bird when he is crossing to the right or left. When there is a steady breeze, the flight of a well-conditioned snipe is very even and steady, offering one of the easiest possible shots. No. 8. is the best sized shot if you do not expect any other game ; but if there be a chance of ducks or teal, No. 7. will answer every purpose—larger shot will not succeed so well, but cause disappointment.

I rather fancy the marais in the vicinity of Montreuil are not so good now as they were formerly, owing to the extent to which draining has been carried, and also in consequence of a great increase in the number of French *chasseurs*: I will not call them sportsmen, as I never met with one who answered our idea of a sportsman ; they are all what are vulgarly called Pot Hunters, as they will all shoot any sort of game on the ground whenever they can get the opportunity ; and as their dogs are taught to fetch their game, chase hares, and not “to down charge,” the amount of noise and confusion which takes place after a Frenchman has discharged his gun and killed his game, can be easily understood. Many and many a good day’s snipe shooting I have had spoiled by

them; many a day the marais (a marsh) would have afforded me a hundred shots if I had not been interrupted: but as they had a more legitimate right to be there than myself, I only make this statement as a matter of fact, and not as a just subject for complaint, except so far as relates to their mode of proceeding, which was as prejudicial to their own sport as to mine.

The moment a Frenchman has killed a jack snipe, you will hear him calling to his dog at the very top of his voice to bring his game—" *Apporte vite à ton maître ! vite, apporte !*"—and if the dog does not take the right direction, you will hear a considerable portion of that part of a Frenchman's vocabulary which commences with *sacré nom*, &c. ; and as your attention will be naturally directed to the quarter from whence the noise proceeds, you will sometimes observe the man and dog both running, the man persevering in his address to his dog—" *Apporte ! sacré nom — !*"—and perhaps the dog giving tongue (this I have witnessed), the consequence of which is that the dog generally flushes five or six snipes before the unfortunate jack is found; and when this is accomplished, and the jack deposited in the *carnassière*, or game bag, without which appendage no French *chasseur* takes the field, then, and not till then, does the Frenchman think of reloading his gun, which of course has

had the opportunity, from the moist atmosphere of the marais, of getting tolerably well damp, which is followed by an endless number of mis-fires (accompanied by an additional quantity of *sacré nom*, &c.), which are attributed to the caps, and not to this unsportsmanlike mode of proceeding. The vexation and annoyance, as well as loss of sport, which would be occasioned by a brace of such sportsmen in a marsh full of snipes, can be more readily imagined than described ; and this has very often been my fate. However, French sportsmen are always very courteous and polite, and never offer you any intentional annoyance—at least, I never experienced any during the many years I shot in France.*

None of the marais in the vicinity of Montreuil are dangerous, neither are the bogs deep, but there is sufficient water to make large boots absolutely necessary ; and as the pace you are obliged to walk at, so as to avoid the holes from which peat has been extracted, is necessarily slow, the large boots will be found more comfortable than fatiguing.

Those who have attempted snipe shooting in

* Except in the receipt of *procès verbaux* from proprietors over whose lands I had inadvertently passed, they being very jealous of any invasion of their rights, in the shape of trespass within their preserved inclosures.

wet marshes, without the protection of large marais boots, have generally had but too good reason to repent it, as severe rheumatic attacks have almost invariably been the consequence. If the marais boots are properly made, and of suitable leather, and the dressing which I have recommended is well rubbed into them, they will not let a drop of water through; but these boots must not be used anywhere but in the marais, as the leather is very soft, and easily damaged—one day's cover shooting would completely spoil them. Two pairs will suffice; but a third pair will not be "*de trop*" in case of accident, as you sometimes may get in over the tops, as I have frequently done, and then they will require a longer time to dry before they will be ready for use, as they must on no account be dried by the fire, except at a great distance from it. It is a good plan to fill them with tow, and hang them up in the kitchen during the night, and out of doors in the day time, if the day be fine, until perfectly dry, and then they may be dressed, the composition being well rubbed in with the hand.

The boots ought to be made sufficiently large to admit of your wearing two pairs of woollen stockings, a second pair being essential to comfort, keeping the feet warm and dry; and as the nature of the ground where you are shooting will not admit of your walking fast, you will

not find the extra pair an impediment to your progress.

A friend of mine, who used occasionally to shoot with me, and who was an excellent sportsman, would never condescend to wear large boots, or take those precautions which I found to be so essential to my immediate comfort and subsequent health, alleging that getting wet never did him any harm, and that he experienced no inconvenience from either wet or cold : he however lived to alter his opinion, and to bitterly regret his imprudence, as he was a martyr to rheumatism ; whereas I have completely and entirely escaped all similar consequences. I have, however, been constantly wet through snipe shooting, in fact, soaked, as I had frequently the best sport in wet weather, but I never experienced inconvenience, or caught cold, during eight seasons of regular shooting in the marais. This I attribute to the use of the large boots, and other equally salutary precautions ; I always wore flannel and warm clothing. My practice was to remain in the marais as long as I could get shots, and get my gun off, and when obliged to discontinue, proceed homewards as fast as possible, remove my wet clothes, put on dry ones, and generally immerse my feet in moderately warm water. It is hazardous to remain stationary when you are wet, a severe cold and illness may be the consequence ; so long as you

continue moving, and keep your blood in active circulation, the perspiration is not checked, and no risk is incurred.

The advantage of the large boots and the thick stockings, even should you chance to get thoroughly wet, by sinking over the tops of the former, is to be found in their retaining a certain degree of heat sufficient to keep your feet quite warm, so long as you continue in motion. Of course after an accident of this kind you must take your boots off, empty the water out, and after having squeezed as much water as you possibly can out of your stockings, replace your boots; you may feel cold for a minute or two, but a little movement will soon restore circulation, and your feet will become perfectly warm, the heat being retained by the thickness of the leather. In the constant transition from the warm, stagnant water of certain parts of the marais, to the cold, chilling spring-water, which you encounter in all directions, the circulation of the blood is perpetually in danger of being interfered with and suddenly checked, if your feet be not protected by stong, thick boots. Having once or twice experienced the bad and disagreeable effects of spring-water, when I have been accidentally exposed to it, under such circumstances, by not having had my large boots on, I can speak advisedly on the subject, and therefore recommend most strongly

all snipe shooters to be well provided with at least two pairs of large boots, and a good supply of the best and thickest woollen stockings.

With regard to the "marais" in France, all which are *bien communal*, viz., those on which the poor have rights of pasturage, and from which they can extract peat, are accessible to the sportsman on his getting permission from one inhabitant. A marais cannot be closed except by the *unanimous* consent of the commune, and *this is* sometimes done, for the purpose of letting the same for the benefit of the commune. Of course a *porte d'arme* is necessary, as without it you are liable to an expensive legal process, styled *Procès Verbal*, which any *garde-champêtre* (and there is in every village) or *gendarme* can institute against you, should he be disposed so to do, on finding you shooting without this protection.

A marais is open at all seasons of the year, and the right of access to it, for snipe shooting, is neither influenced by *l'ouverture*, nor interfered with by *la clôture de la chasse*. You must, however, be very cautious what lands you cross in going to and returning from the marais, either *before* the *chasse* is opened, or *after* it is closed; for were you carelessly crossing a field which was not marsh land, and not *bien communal*, and allowing your dogs to beat it, although it was next to impossible that a head of game could be found

on it, you would, nevertheless, be liable to a *procès verbal*, should the *garde* meet with you at that moment, and declare *procès verbal* against you. This once occurred to me; the *garde-champêtre* having lain in wait purposely to have the opportunity of declaring his *procès*, whereby he gained five francs for himself, although he knew well enough that virtually I had no intention of violating the law. I merely crossed one field between the *marais* and the road—and this field was as bare as the road—but as my dogs were not at heel, he *swore*, on making his *procès*, that he found me “*en chasse sur la plaine*,” and as this was after the *clôture* of the *chasse*, I was fined about sixty francs, with forfeiture of my gun. Having violated the letter of the law, you are not obliged to give up the identical gun with which you were shooting, but one as nearly like it as possible, and this can be purchased for about twenty francs.

The *armourier*, i.e. gunsmith, of the locality has generally a stock on hand of these substitutes, to meet the demands of the numerous fines inflicted, as no penalty is ever pronounced for *délit de chasse* without its including the sacrifice of the gun. If therefore your gun be a double copper cap, then the substitute must be one also; and as for the locks, as the *armourier* said, “*pourvû que cela marche, voilà tout*.” The *garde de chasse*, in my case, perjured himself; but as this worthy

functionary is always believed by the Procureur du Roi, and the letter of the law is invariably applied in these cases, no explanation you can afford is ever of any avail.

To procure a *porte d'arme*, you must, in the first instance, obtain the permission of two landed proprietors, in writing, to shoot over their land, and deposit this written document, with fifteen francs, at the *Mairie*, i. e., *Maison de Ville*, or Town-hall. Afterwards, it is merely necessary to deposit the old *porte d'arme* and your money at the *Mairie*, to obtain a renewal; and this you had better do in the summer months, as *portes d'arme* are only issued from one town in each department, and there is sometimes a very great delay in responding to the application, so that if your demand had been sent in only a short time before the opening of the *chasse*, you might be disappointed, as was constantly the case during the time I was in France.

I mention this because although you might have paid the money, and subscribed to all necessary formalities, you could not safely venture out with your gun until your *porte d'arme* arrived, as you are bound to produce it for the inspection of every *gendarme* and *garde-champêtre*, who may request to see it; and as an explanation in the absence of it would not satisfy the above functionaries, a declaration of *procès verbal* would be the

immediate consequence, besides an order to you to desist from shooting—and I believe a *gendarme* might seize your gun if he pleased. The *garde-champêtre*, under all emergencies, is, however, easily appeased, a *pièce de quarante sous*, in ordinary cases, sufficing; but the *gensdarme* are incorruptible—so much so that I never knew, or even ever heard of, a solitary instance to the contrary, although they seldom interfere with persons shooting, except at the commencement of the season, and then only during the two or three first days, when they are ordered out in *pairs* by their superior officer to explore the country, and make their report on their return.

Their province when out is to ascertain that all persons shooting are furnished with a *porte d'arme*, and also to declare *procès verbal* against any *chasseur* they may find either trespassing on any standing corn, or allowing his dogs to do so. This is a *délit de chasse* against the public, from which there is no escape when a *gendarme* declares his *procès*, but is easily compromised with the *garde-champêtre*; in fact, five francs to each *garde-champêtre*, on the opening of the *chasse*, makes them blind during the entire season—and this is very intelligible, as their pay is miserably low. Some of the private *gardes-champêtre* are, however, a little more difficult at first, and require stronger arguments than the

former, but, with management, are not at all refractory. I never had any *procès* after my first year's residence in France. A *garde-champêtre* cannot declare his *procès* except he have his badge of office on him; and this consists of a broad belt round his waist, in the centre of which there is a plate, on which is written the name of his parish, together with his title, functions, &c. Sometimes, however, this plate is fastened on the arm; but as it is bright, and may be seen at a distance, they frequently pocket it, when in pursuit of any delinquents, and only produce it when close at hand. As the *gensdarmes* are always on horseback, they are easily perceived from a distance, and their appearance at any time is hailed by the legitimate *chasseur* with pleasure, as the poachers, with whom every district more or less abounds, and who are considered a great nuisance, are immediately put to flight, and do not reappear for several days. The *braconnier du village* is never interfered with or molested by the *garde de chasse*, the latter being generally a neighbour, relative, or friend of his; and if you make any complaint to the *garde*, his reply invariably is, "Mais, monsieur, il faut que tout le monde vive."

I have sometimes known *gensdarmes* to have visited particular districts on foot, disguised in a plain dress, when commanded so to do by their

chef, in consequence of complaints having been made to the *gendarmerie* against certain individuals for poaching, i. e., shooting without a *porte d'arme*. The *gensdarmes*, however, never interfere with the *huttiers*, provided they confine themselves to their hut-shooting. There is one singular circumstance under which a *gendarme* can make a *procès verbal*, which I mention as an illustration of the paternal care of the French government, and that is, in the case of a *chasseur* being found shooting in his *own* standing corn. The proprietor, when detected in this predicament, by a *gendarme*, is considered as doing a public injury, and is as liable to a *procès* for *délit de chasse* as a stranger.

HUT-SHOOTING IN FRANCE.

On the French coast, duck shooting from huts is so extensively resorted to by the peasants, and with so much success, that not only are the towns in the immediate vicinity of the operations supplied with wildfowl during the season, but even Paris is indebted to this prolific source for its con-

stant and abundant supply, as I believe they have no decoys in France similar to ours. Very few, if any, *chasseurs* pursue this sport as an amusement; it is purely one of business, and hundreds of the poorer classes obtain their livelihood by it during the winter months. It involves little expense beyond ammunition, a gun, and a pair of marais boots, and no skill in shooting, all the shots being sitting ones, and at a short distance; and as the barrel of the gun rests upon a bar of wood, or piece of turf, under the aperture through which the muzzle is presented, and as there is no occasion for hurry, the most deadly aim can easily be taken, especially when a large flight of ducks is to be fired into. I have known one man kill as many as forty wild ducks in one night and morning, for it is only during the evening and morning flights that any number of shots are had, wildfowl rarely moving during the night, when once settled at their feeding places, unless, by some accident, they may have been disturbed; but sometimes a shot or two is had during the night, especially when the moon is up.

The places selected for the building of the huts are various; if on private property, permission must be obtained from the proprietor, and this is rarely refused; but, in some localities, certain positions are so very favourable and lucrative, that they are let by the proprietors to the huttiers

by the season; but, generally speaking, four-fifths of the huttiers make their huts on "*bien communal*," where they have a right to do so if they belong to the commune; and as all along the sea-coast, at least in those parts where I have resided, there has always been a vast extent of marais, or marsh, which has been "*bien communal*," the poorer classes experienced no obstacle to their obtaining their living in this manner. And no *porte d'arme* is required.

There is a sort of tacit understanding between the huttiers not to interfere with or annoy one another, so that when a huttier has once taken up a position he maintains it year after year, without being interfered with by his brother huttiers. Sometimes huts are located within a quarter of a mile of the sea-coast, sometimes at a distance of six or more miles, the remote places being as good, sometimes better, than those in the immediate vicinity of the sea: the essential point is to be either near the feeding-ground, or in the line of flight taken by the wild fowl night and morning.

I resided during several winters close to a large marais, which was distant about seven miles from the sea. In and about this there were from thirty to fifty huts; and as the place of my abode, at this season of the year, was not more than half a mile from the scene of operations, I used con-

stantly during night to hear the report of the huttiers' guns, which resounded along the marshy ground more like small cannon than fowling-pieces; but as the arm generally used by these men is an old musket converted into a copper-cap gun, and will carry a pretty good charge, the loudness of the report can be well understood, somewhat augmented by the stillness of the night.

The summer season is generally selected for the building of huts, in order that they may be made warm, dry, and comfortable: they are ordinarily sufficiently capacious to contain two persons and a dog. The places selected are sometimes on small islands or promontories commanding a view over two pieces of water surrounded by reeds and rushes, occasionally at the edge of a piece of water, sometimes exactly in the centre of it, if the water be what is called an overflow, or artificial, which it very frequently is, by being supplied from some neighbouring canal or stream, and contained within certain boundaries by sods and turf conveyed and placed there by the huttiers. When this is the case, the hut is almost invariably placed in the centre; and as the water is only knee-deep, the huttier walks through with his marais-boots, fixes his decoy-ducks to their different positions, and picks up his birds after a shot without difficulty;

whereas, in deep water, a man requires a dog to fetch his birds, and a boat to convey him to and from his hut, if it be on an island. The most convenient places, therefore, are where the water is shallow, and quite as good as those where the water is deep, if the spot be judiciously selected relatively to the line of flight of the fowl; and this is easily ascertained, as it is a curious fact in natural history, respecting the instincts of birds of passage, that year after year they may be observed arriving and departing to and from precisely the same direction, as if a road were marked out in the heavens for them to pursue. And they have also a certain line of flight at night, when they come inland to their feeding-ground; so much so, that sportsmen, in many places, remain in the evening to await the flight at particular spots, and have good sport.

In the beginning of the month of November, I have frequently observed the arrival of wild fowl of all kinds, together with plovers and snipes, all coming from the same direction against the wind, as if they had all one destined point to reach; and although all these birds of passage invariably travel against the wind, the large and various flights scarcely ever arrive except the breeze is sharp and cutting. A moderate breeze, although in a favourable quarter, is seldom attended by any large flights of fowl. From the 28th of October to

the beginning of November, I have generally observed the largest flights of all sorts of birds of passage. On the 28th of October, in the year 1828, at Montreuil, in France, I witnessed the arrival of the greatest amount of snipes, ducks, teal, and plover, I ever saw in my life. The wind was blowing strong from the south-east, and had been in that quarter previously through the night. During the whole of the day I observed large flights arriving—snipes dropping in the marais, the plovers upon the plain, the ducks and teal in the river and different large pieces of water in the marais. All the huttiers were of course out on the night succeeding this arrival of the wild fowl, this being a signal for the commencement of their nocturnal operations. I killed, in four consecutive days, 120 snipes, with some few teal, ducks, and golden plover. The amount killed by the huttiers, of ducks and teal, was large.

The huttiers seldom kill any other wild fowl from their huts besides the common wild duck and teal. The flights of widgeon will not drop to the call of the decoy-ducks. Sometimes I have known them kill a bird called "*le rouge*," which is considered in France the best eating of all the wild fowl: it is generally very fat when in good condition. The male bird has a reddish breast, and the bill is large, flat, and round. It is not,

however, what we call the red widgeon ; if anything, it is rather smaller. I have never met with these birds in either England or Scotland ; I therefore suppose they are not very common, and have only very rarely shot them in France.

I will now endeavour to describe how the hut is constructed, and give some slight detail of subsequent operations. When the spot is fixed on, and the size decided, a little trench is dug round the external circumference, to a depth sufficient to carry off any water from the intended base of this nocturnal domicile. The centre is then excavated to the depth of about one or two feet, leaving an intervening space sufficient for two persons to sit down comfortably. The superstructure, which is of circular form, is then made by willow or hazel branches fixed deeply and firmly in the sides, the longer and stronger ones forming a semicircle, by each point being fixed in the ground at the opposite sides of the excavation : a small opening is left either in the front or in the rear, to admit of the huttier's access. When the woodwork is completed, straw and dry rushes are introduced thickly between the branches, and strongly interwoven ; there is then a final covering of turf, with the sward outside, so as to give the hut, when finished, the appearance of a mound of earth. A door is made to close the aperture through which the passage is effected,

the external part of which is also covered with turf. There are also several loopholes, through which the huttier can either command a view of his piece of water, or pass his gun through when occasion may require: these he keeps filled with straw, removing, and replacing again, as occasion may require. Huts, when made in the manner which I have described, are very warm and comfortable, in fact sometimes too warm. There is, of course, always a good supply of straw, fern, or dry rushes at the bottom, and with sometimes a board or two underneath. I have often found them very serviceable as a place of refuge from a heavy storm during the day, when out snipe shooting.

From three to five decoy-ducks are generally used — if three, then one mallard; if five, then two — and these are tied by the leg, in the water, to stakes driven in for the purpose, and are placed at respective distances, some on one side of the water, some on the other, so as to leave the centre clear for the reception and killing of the wild fowl, without molestation or injury to the decoy-birds. The wild fowl will, however, drop frequently quite close to the tame birds, in which case the huttier is obliged to exercise patience, till a fair opportunity presents itself of his being able to secure the most productive shot, clear of his own ducks, by availing himself of the moment when the largest number may be together. When the water

surrounding the hut is too deep to admit of the stakes being driven into the ground, as is generally the case in those positions which are naturally insular, a long cord is drawn across the pool of water, and secured on the banks of the opposite sides, and the decoy-ducks are fastened to this cord at intervals, and when ducks are killed a dog is required to bring them, or perhaps a boat is used, which lies concealed in some contiguous reeds.

In the overflows, or artificial pieces of water, the huttier, who is generally provided with long marais-boots, walks into the water, and secures his ducks immediately, without any difficulty, especially if he has a dog to assist him, which most of them have, and then returns to his hut, reloads, and is ready forthwith for another chance. He ought to reload in the first instance; but no Frenchman ever thinks of loading his gun, in any sort of shooting, till he has bagged his game. The man who is surrounded by deep water cannot proceed with equal celerity, as it sometimes requires time to secure his wounded birds; however, rather than risk a delay by pursuing wounded birds too long, whereby he might lose a favourable opportunity for another shot, he secures the dead birds, and as many others as he can on the spot, leaving the remainder till morning, when he has no difficulty in finding most of them, with

the assistance of his dog, in the contiguous reeds and rushes. Some, however, of course escape, and become prizes for the snipe shooter who may chance to beat the marais on the succeeding day. I have bagged many in this way, and many more which had been only slightly wounded, and could fly very well, but, from having been touched, had not left the marais, but taken refuge in thick rushes and water: these birds generally lie very close to a point. The huttiers sometimes, however, beat the marais themselves at daybreak, with their dogs, in quest of their wounded birds, when they have shot into large flights during the night, and fancy any of them are lying in the vicinity of their huts, and often in this respect very much interfere with the sport of the snipe shooter, who is, perhaps, advancing to commence his sport just as they have finished theirs; however, on a favourable day for snipe shooting, the snipes don't leave the marais when disturbed—they merely change their ground, and when not shot at soon drop again, but they don't lie quite so well after having been once flushed. As soon as it is light in the morning snipes lie remarkably close.

November and December are the two best months for the huttier. Ducks are then most abundant, are in the best condition, and fetch the highest price. January is sometimes as good, if the weather be not too severe. “Les hut-

tiers" generally take possession of their huts about half an hour before dark, so as to be prepared for the first flight. When I was in France, and in the daily habit of snipe shooting in the marais during the autumn, I used constantly to meet these nocturnal sportsmen proceeding to the scene of their operations, with their baskets of decoy-ducks upon their backs; and before I had left the marais, the quacking resounded from one end of the valley to the other, relieved by an occasional shot.

The majority of the huttiers remain all night, and, after the evening flight is over, go quietly to sleep and await the morning flight. Some go home after the evening flight, if their cottages be close at hand, and return before break of day for the morning flight.

The birds used as decoy-ducks, although tame and domesticated, are, I believe, of the wild breed: they have their exact size, shape and make, colour and plumage, and the same fineness of the web of the foot; hence their efficiency for the purpose for which they are used: their quacking is incessant, and I presume intelligible to their wilder brethren in the heavens, as it is constantly responded to by them, and occasions their immediate descent.

Some of the huttiers adopt the plan of having one mallard in the hut with them, one of his legs

being secured by a lengthy cord, so that they may occasionally let him out to stimulate the quacking, when it has from any unknown cause momentarily ceased.

Common English ducks would be useless for the purpose of hut-shooting, even if you could induce them to quack as incessantly as these foreigners, as their invitation would not be attended to by birds of passage, their language probably not being intelligible. This fact has been ascertained by experiment, and may be verified by those who have large pieces of water suitable for wild fowl, by procuring a few brace of common French ducks, breeding from them, and confining them to these localities. Roosting places may be made for them amongst the reeds, on the sides of the water, or on an island if there be one, so that they may be on the water at all times when their instinct may take them there; and it will then be seen that as soon as the passage of wild fowl, in the early part of winter, commences, your Frenchmen will have numerous companions.

If the pool be extensive, have places of concealment suitable for the breeding of fowl, and away from any thoroughfare, so that the wild fowl are not liable to be disturbed, and of course not shot at. Many will remain to breed, of both ducks and teal; the two latter breed in Scotland in the

heather, and amongst rushes contiguous to the fresh-water lochs, and give very good sport in the months of July and August, after which, they make their way down to the sea-water lochs, and remain there for winter sport.

But to return to the system of "hutting" in France, I must not omit to mention that nets instead of guns are sometimes used, and with success. These are fixed in a frame of slightly made woodwork, with two wings, one on either side of the piece of water, the decoy-ducks being in the centre; the huttier having a small cord fastened to the stick which supports either net, by the removal of which both nets fall simultaneously, enclosing whatever wild fowl may be in the centre. If this plan were well carried out, it would be much more productive than the gun; but it would seem that there are difficulties in the way, from its not being generally adopted.

I recollect a Frenchman telling me of a friend of his, a huttier, living on the coast near Etaples, having on one occasion enclosed so large a quantity of ducks that his net gave way in all directions, and he only succeeded in securing seven or eight of them: his loss of course was considerable, and his friend observed, "*il en a pleuré du chagrin.*" The probability is, that the net was some old fishing-net, half rotten; but the fact of his having been able to enclose so large a number of

wild fowl is sufficient evidence that the principle was good, and that his want of complete success arose solely from his bad tackle.

I have occasionally been in these huts, but never had much sport; but even if I had had, I should never have become attached to this description of shooting, as I dislike the confinement so much that no amount of game would be any compensation. As a continuous pursuit, the greatest charm in shooting appears to me to consist in the inducement to exercise, imparting health, vigour of body and mind, and good spirits, not in the amount of game slaughtered. Of course every sportsman likes to kill a certain quantity of game as a reward for his exertions, but I don't think the large amount killed is always an evidence of the pleasure and sport that have been had.

For my own part, I would much rather shoot over a wild country where there was a mixture of game, where the result of the day's sport depended upon my own exertions, and when in the morning, before starting, I should be in a pleasing state of doubt and uncertainty as to the quantity or kind of game I might kill,—than shoot over highly preserved land, where the amount to be killed was limited and fixed before starting, so that I should know nearly to a certainty how much I could kill, as well as the description of game. But “*de gustibus non est disputandum*,” so I will say no

more upon this point, but return to my relinquished ground in the marais and to the operations of the huttiers thereon.

As long as the weather remains fine and open, they go regularly every night to their huts; but when there is no moon, and the nights are very dark, their chances of sport are much reduced, as the twilight is of very short duration, and when night once sets in, the obscurity is so great that although they hear the ducks in the water before them they are not at all times able to discern them so as to take a shot, and are therefore compelled to await with patience their chance at daybreak; but as one good shot repays them, they seldom desert their posts.

When a frost takes place, if it only lasts a few days, it does not much interfere with their sport, or, rather, success. They break the ice with a pole, fix their decoy-ducks, and keep the centre as clear and open as they can, and sometimes make some capital shots. When the frost continues beyond two or three days, the nocturnal part of the business is relinquished, and they merely go to their huts in the morning, an hour before daybreak, and try their chance; after which, they resort to the river, which in a severe frost gives admirable sport, and attracts a host of chasseurs, especially on Sunday: then every man who has a *porte d'arme*

is sure to be out, and a great many who have not, immediately make a rapid retreat on the appearance of a *gendarme*.

From Montreuil to Etaples, a distance of about three miles, the latter being on the sea-coast, there is an excellent river for wild fowl shooting, in every respect suitable. In the first place, it is not more than from forty to sixty yards in breadth, till within a mile of Etaples, where it empties itself into the sea, in this latter distance being about double its former breadth; in the next place, it pursues a very circuitous and serpentine course, forming inviting angles, corners, and nooks for wild fowl to drop in, and, as throughout the distance the banks are high and overhanging, every opportunity is afforded to the sportsman of close approximation to the objects of his search, when either observed from a distance in the river, or seen to drop.

The numerous turns and bends in the river (the banks being high) afford also endless places of concealment as the wild fowl approach from the sea, either at the usual hours of flight or at the rising of the tide, and first-rate sport might always be had during a frost, if not marred by the superabundance of chasseurs. Early in the morning, and sometimes during the day, when the weather was very severe, I have had capital sport; the flights of fowl were numerous and

large, and when the tide rose they came inland in quick succession, following the course of the river, and generally within gun-shot, some dropping in the river, others pursuing their aëreal course.

By keeping concealed behind a bank, I have fired on these occasions a series of very productive double shots in succession, and found Ely's common cartridges very successful; but although I have frequently fired into the middle of very large flocks of widgeon, and almost constantly killed two birds with each barrel, I seldom killed more with the cartridge. But the advantage of the cartridge is found in actually *killing* your birds, there being no plunging or diving in the water. Nine times out of ten they fall dead; whereas, although with loose shot more birds might be brought down, four out of five would be winged birds, and occasion much trouble, loss of time, and subsequent sport, even with a good retriever. For single birds, at long distances, I found Ely's cartridges unexceptionable.

During several severe winters at Montreuil, the flights of wild fowl were large and abundant, combining an endless variety. I killed many birds that were unknown to me, besides ducks, teal, widgeon, sheldrake, wild goose, and swan: of wild geese there were many large flocks. I also saw several flights of swans; in one there were as many as twenty-one. I happened to

get a shot at one which was alone in the river, and killed him. The common and red widgeon were very numerous, but the most abundant in very severe weather was the black widgeon, which the French call "pilet." The flights of these are large, there being sometimes as many as from twenty to fifty together. They are very tough and difficult to kill, and when only winged give the retrievers much difficulty; in fact, without the further assistance of the gun, they would escape, as their power of diving and keeping under water is very great, and even as a sitting shot in the water, at a moderate distance, put the best of guns to the test—so much so, that it is better to avoid a sitting shot, although close, when you have a probability of securing a double shot on their rising, especially if the flight be a large one. These birds are, however, strong-flavoured, and not worth cooking.

WILD FOWL SHOOTING IN SCOTLAND.

The western coast of Scotland affords ample opportunity, during the months of November, December, and January, for wild fowl shooting from punts, to those who are fond of this arduous

and sometimes rather perilous amusement. In the first place, there is an abundant supply of wild fowl of every description, especially if the winter be severe; in the next place there are numerous sea-water lochs, receding far inland amidst woods and rocks, with various nooks, corners, bays, creeks and other favourite places of resort of fowl; sometimes small islands, having nooks and bays, partially sheltered by overhanging rocks.

All these spots are of easy access to the "gunner" with his punt in moderately fine weather, and as many of them, on the retiring of the tide, afford first-rate feeding ground for widgeon, the weed of which they are fond being produced in abundance, the opportunity for sport is sure to present itself most favourably whenever the moon, tide and wind may be suitable. But even in the day-time wild-fowl of all kinds are easily approached in these localities with a punt by judicious management, if there be a slight breeze, and the day be in other respects favourable, inasmuch as, from being rarely fired at by any casual shooters, they are neither shy nor wild.

The first year I was on the western coast of Scotland, during the autumn and winter, I frequently observed flocks of widgeon, from three to five hundred together, day after day, in the same sea-water lochs, which might have been easily approached with a punt; but as neither I

nor those who were with me had either punt or any gun beyond common shoulder-guns, the widgeon remained unmolested, and appeared to take little notice of numerous shots fired at snipes and other game in the immediate vicinity of the lochs. They would, however, when disturbed by fishermen sometimes fly from one loch to another during the day, as there were two large lochs parallel to each other, and almost immediately proximate, being separated only by a small intervening promontory. These two lochs were also equally their place of resort by night, as the mud, which was accessible at low water, was covered with that particular seaweed to which widgeon are partial. In these two lochs there were about a thousand widgeons; they made their appearance at the end of October, and remained during the winter. When occasionally disturbed by boats, or by the arrival of vessels, they took flight as far as two small islands, about a mile out in the open sea; here, on several occasions, a few brace were killed by common fowling-pieces, the facility of proximate access being great, owing to the favourable nature of the sides of the islands; but a large punt-gun, both here and in the two lochs, would have done wonderful execution.

These islands were also much resorted to by wild geese, especially as a roosting place, although I have occasionally found them there during the

day, and killed a few. The geese arrive in this part of Scotland generally as early as August, and do much mischief to the farmers' oats, which they attack at daybreak, or perhaps earlier, and then retire to the islands to roost; they, however, sometimes remain in the oats during the whole day if not disturbed.

The coast in this part of the Highlands is so very flat, that scarcely any chance of sport is afforded to the sportsman with any ordinary fowling-piece; the punt and big gun must therefore be resorted to. A large sized punt, about 22 feet, is the most convenient, as it will hold three persons, will carry a sail, and in moderately fine weather is perfectly safe. If a punt be well made, she cannot be upset by any sea; the only liability is of taking water in, when either sailing fast *before* the wind, owing to her extremely sharp, narrow and shallow stern, or by being exposed to a heavy *side* sea. But a punt may be so constructed that she cannot sink, even if filled with water, by having air-pipes round her sides and in her fore part.

The best materials for a punt are oak, elm, Norway deal of the best quality and withy; oak or elm for her bottom, Norway deal for her sides, withy for her deck and bulwarks, and tough ash for her timbers; all the fastenings and metal-work to be of copper. I have, however, seen and used a very excellent punt built entirely of Nor-

way deal; she was light and buoyant, sailed well, and answered every purpose for which she was intended; she was 22 feet in length. A clever country boat-builder completed her under three weeks, with the assistance of two persons to do the rough work. Having witnessed her construction at intervals during its progress, I will give the best explanation I am able as to the *modus operandi*. I must, however, refer those of my readers who are desirous of obtaining fuller information to Colonel Hawker's admirable work. He is, in fact, the parent of these gunning-punts, having, I believe, originated and most unquestionably brought them to perfection, and the sporting world are much indebted to him for the elaborate and perspicuous manner in which he has conveyed his communications.

The punt whose construction I witnessed was built after Colonel Hawker's last model, but entirely of Norway deal, save the timbers, which, of necessity, were of ash. Length from stem to stern, 22 feet 7 inches; at bottom, 21 feet 10 inches. The bottom planks were half an inch thick, the centre plank not being thicker than the others, as in Colonel Hawker's, this being a deviation from his plan. He recommends the centre plank to be $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick, for the purpose of receiving the staunchion; but when it is intended only to use a single gun, it can be

supported by the deck, with the assistance of a copper rest at the stem of the punt, and moved as the gunner may wish, subject, however, at all times to the salutary restraint of a powerful rope breeching. A small block may be fixed for the reception of the mast. After the bottom planks are fastened together, and reduced at their extreme ends to their proper shape, a strong cord is then tied round tightly in several places, so as to give to the bottom a slight convexity of shape; because, if the bottom were perfectly flat, the punt would neither sail so well, pass so easily through shallow places, nor be moved to and from the shore with the same facility. If the convexity were too great, it would make the punt less safe, but it ought to be so slight as to be scarcely perceptible, in which case it will not diminish its security in the slightest degree.

During the time the bottom remains fastened (two days will be sufficient for the purpose), the sides may be prepared; these may be three-eighths of an inch in thickness, height at bow $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches, astern 10 inches. They must be inclined outwards, so as to admit of the deck amidships being 9 inches wider than the bottom, *i.e.* 4 feet 9 inches, the bottom being 4 feet in width. This external inclination of the sides is very essential to security. After the sides are added to the bottom, the timbers, which must be of tough

ash, steamed or boiled, so as to render them pliable, may be fastened with copper nails, and securely riveted; they must be at intervals of about nine inches. The decks may then be fixed; it is important that they be slightly convex, both fore, aft and elsewhere, so that no water can lodge, which would otherwise be attended with great inconvenience and some risk, especially in frosty weather, by becoming congealed, and rendering the gunner's movements thereon, whilst loading, insecure and dangerous.

The decks may be covered with waterproof canvas, which must fit closely and securely. Canvas painted on the outside will answer the purpose, and if applied to the decks immediately after they are tarred, it will adhere firmly and give strength to the punt without adding to its weight. When this operation is finished, the bulwarks may be annexed. These should be 4 inches in height forward, gradually declining aft to 2. Openings must be left for skulling; these to be closed when their use is not required, the moveable parts being made to fit well. There will be an aperture in the bulwarks fore, to receive the gun, and this part of the deck will be made sufficiently strong to support the gun with the assistance of the copper rest at the stem.

The thowles or rullocks may now be placed at proper intervals for skulling or rowing; sometimes

these are moveable, but I think it will be found more convenient to have them fixed, and there may perhaps be an advantage in having them covered with leather, especially for night-work, as the slightest noise will sometimes alarm and disturb widgeon, their sense of hearing being very acute. It will be as well to protect the bottom of the punt by having light, thin planks laid down, one-eighth of an inch in thickness; these to be moveable; and upon them you may place any suitable covering you may think proper to lie down upon. The opening in a punt of 22 feet will be sufficiently large to admit of three persons lying down conveniently, being 6 feet in length.

When the punt is not in use, she ought to be protected by a light covering, fitting exactly over her bulwarks. The stem may be rendered more secure against damage arising from collision with rocky or stony ground, when forced through shallow places, by having a slight covering of copper. Before the punt is used and put to sea, she must be well tarred in the inside, and the outside may be painted, with the exception of the bottom, which must be tarred and calked; and this latter operation must be repeated at intervals, if the punt be much used, so as to make her perfectly water-tight.

Slate-colour will perhaps be found the best for the deck and sides, but the nearer it approaches

the colour of the water the better, so as to be as little perceptible as possible. There will be a copper fastening to receive the mast in the deck, immediately under that part which is open to sustain the gun. The mast will obtain further support from a block, fixed in the bottom of the punt to receive it, if the centre plank has not been originally made of sufficient thickness for the purpose; and this point is worthy of consideration at the time of building. The mast should be nine feet in height, the sail to correspond, with reefs, in case of necessity; the rudder, as in all small boats, will of course be moveable.

The loading rod for large guns ought to be made of the lightest possible wood, with a thin copper cylinder at the end to receive the powder, *partly* open on one side, so that when it reaches the breech of the gun, the powder which it conveys may be deposited therein on the rod being reversed; the person loading elevating the gun as much as possible from its horizontal position, so that the powder may reach its destination. The handle of the rod can be flat on the open side of this cylinder, so as to be sensible to the touch in the dark, in which case this operation may be performed at night without mistake.

Suitable wadding can be had from any London gun-maker, and it is essential that this be securely rammed down on the powder; attention cannot

be too particularly directed to this point, both for security and effective shooting. Cartridges are frequently employed, but as the amount of shot used is large, it being often a pound, the paper which forms the envelope must be strong, and on this account I think they are objectionable, and loose shot preferable, as I am persuaded that there is a very great uncertainty as to the distance at which they may burst, and that sometimes they do not burst at all, so that some of the finest chances may be lost. I have frequently known this to have been the case, and loose shot will answer every purpose when the fowl are not very wild, and obviate disappointment too frequently consequent on the use of cartridges.

For widgeon and ducks, No. 1., I think, will be found most effective, although double and single B. are frequently used; your chance, however, of killing numbers with these is somewhat diminished, except when fowl are very wild. The sportsman must therefore be guided by circumstances as to the size of his shot. There is a coarse powder prepared and sold specially for these large guns, which must be secured; the quantity will be the exact *measure* of the loose shot used, so that the rule applicable to ordinary fowling-pieces holds good with these larger guns.

Some skill and tact are necessary in firing a large

punt-gun, so as to avoid the recoil, which is sometimes severe, and I should recommend the beginner to practise first with a small quantity of powder, increasing it progressively till he arrives at the full charge, and can manage the same skilfully. In taking his aim, he must lay himself down in the punt, having his left hand on the stock of the gun, so as to direct it, his cheek slightly resting upon it; with the right hand he will pull the trigger, taking care at the same time to let the stock of the gun pass under his right arm, sufficient pressure being given by his left for this purpose. A very small stock is necessary, as far as the butt end is concerned, about half the length of a usual fowling-piece, as it is not intended to put this stock to the shoulder.

If the gun be properly managed at the time of firing, the rope breeching will be found sufficient to counteract the effect of the recoil, without any other apparatus, *provided* the gun be of moderate size, and *not overloaded*. From the largest size guns the recoil was found to be so great, that a contrivance of some sort in addition to the rope breeching was found to be necessary to counteract it, and Colonel Hawker invented a spring swivel for the purpose, the gun at the same time resting on a stanchion fixed to the bottom of the punt. How this answered I am not able to say, never having either seen or used one; but

Colonel Hawker speaks highly in favour of it, and on this particular point I must refer my readers for information to the Colonel's admirable work.

In approaching widgeon in the sea-water lochs by day, the gunner must be guided by circumstances. Sometimes, when they are not wild, the best plan will be to allow the punt to drift gently down wind, till you get within shot, those in the punt keeping themselves as much out of sight as possible; at other times you must go up wind. But this is not always either an easy or successful operation, unless you have the tide in your favour; but where either ducks or widgeon have not been much shot at, and are not very wild, by good management they will be easily accessible on a day which is in every respect suitable, with a sufficient breeze.

The gunner, and those with him, will of course take care to be suitably clothed as to colour, this being as essential as in stalking. In approaching widgeon or wild ducks at night, you must on no account go down wind, as they would both wind you and hear you to a certainty, and be off before you came within shot of them; but having ascertained the precise places where they feed, you must advance up wind as quietly as possible. If the moon be up and facing you, so much the better, you will then have a good view of your birds on the mud, and be able to take a more

deadly aim. Be sure to fire high enough, directing the point of your gun to the furthest birds on the line which you intend sweeping. The best moment, if the moon and night favour you, is just before the tide is beginning to flow, for by that time the birds will have been several hours feeding, and have become settled to their position. Should you arrive too early, your chance will not be so good; it will therefore be better to exercise a little patience, especially if the night be fine.

If there be a large flock of widgeon, you will hear them long before you see them. If the noise be continuous, it is a good sign; if it be only at intervals, it must be considered as a bad omen, indicating alarm and suspicion on their part,—you must therefore exercise more caution. When the whistling and purring is unbroken and continuous, you may conclude that the widgeon are busily engaged feeding, and settled to their ground without suspicion, so that, if you manage well, you will be sure to get a good shot. The sharp, whistling note proceeds from the cock bird, the harsher one from the hen. In the day-time the gunner will get many flying shots; and as some of these may be partially unexpected, while he is turning the corner of some creek or bay, it will be essential to success in these instances to have a man who thoroughly understands skulling, and who will,

on the emergency of the moment, give the punt the requisite and most advantageous directions.

When crossing those parts of the loch where there is no chance of a shot, and where the sea is at all rough, it will always be advisable to have the lock and the muzzle of the gun protected with coverings for the purpose, and also immediately after a shot: this precaution must not be neglected. It would of course be better to reload instantly; but where there are many cripples, the anxiety to secure them is too great to admit of this being done till the produce of the shot be bagged. You must therefore keep your big gun as dry as possible in the mean time, and perhaps it will not be a bad plan to wipe her out before re-loading. Your small gun may be safely slung under the side of the punt, protected by a waterproof covering, and so placed, that if it were accidentally discharged, it would do no injury; the best sized shot for the cripples is No. 7., as you get into very close quarters, to give them a *coup de grace*.

A common landing-net, such as is used for landing trout, will be found most useful to convey your dead birds from the water into the punt. A good retriever will be very serviceable, especially for night-work; but none of any but a very hardy breed would be of much use in cold, severe weather—the small Newfoundland, of the St. John's breed,

I think, will be found to answer best. The gunner will of course take care to be warmly clad with woollen clothing, with a light-coloured mackintosh, as an overcovering, to be used or laid aside as circumstances may suggest. He ought to have two pairs of thick woollen stockings on, and over these a good pair of long fisherman's boots, coming well up the thigh. Rather take extra clothing for night-work than insufficient, especially in frosty weather, as it may be frequently necessary to be stationary, when either expecting the arrival of wildfowl, or awaiting the most suitable state of the tide. If the big fisherman's boots be objected to on account of their weight, waterproof over-alls may be substituted, and the common shooting boot worn.

WOODCOCK SHOOTING.

If cocks were more abundant, woodcock shooting would, I believe, take the precedence of even grouse shooting. As it is, I am one of those who infinitely prefer it to that or any other kind of shooting. There is so much variety attached to it; the spot in which you find the bird is so frequently unexpected; then his irregular

manner of rising, the peculiar flap of his wings, which cannot be mistaken, electrically vibrating on the sportsman's ear, especially if it be the first cock of the season; his varied flight when up, sometimes slow, heavy and oscillating, at other times direct and rapid as a hawk; then there is always an uncertainty as to the direction which he may take, whether he will go to the right or to the left, straight forward, or come exactly towards you;—in fact, there is sometimes a suspense of several moments, first between your hearing and seeing him, next between your seeing and being able to decide when to shoot at him; at other times you hear, see, and shoot at him at the same moment, and although you had only an instant's glance at him, are as successful as if you had had him in sight for several moments. All these circumstances create an interest, and produce an anxiety with the keen sportsman which constitute the peculiar charm of woodcock shooting.

But as this combination of circumstances can only occur in a wild country, amongst rocks, heather, brushwood, dingles and dells, the excitement and the interest which I attach to woodcock shooting, may appear exaggerated to those who have simply shot this bird in England, where the uniform character of the cover is such, that the rising and flight of the woodcock may

present little variety; but still I believe it is rare to find a genuine sportsman who is not more pleased at shooting a woodcock than any other bird. Those who have shot in wild countries, will thoroughly enter into my sporting feelings on the subject.

The woodcock is generally considered an easy shot; but, notwithstanding this opinion, there is no bird so frequently missed; and if the experience of good shots be appealed to, I think it will be admitted no great number of cocks has ever been killed consecutively.

To this it may be replied, numerous chance and long shots are taken, because the cock, being a bird of passage, and also a tender bird, and easily brought down, the remotest chance is taken advantage of; but still, apart from this consideration, I believe more fair shots are missed by even good shots, than at any other bird; and, if this be the case, I think it fair to conclude, that he is not so easy a bird to kill as is generally supposed. If he would rise, like any other bird, at a fair distance, and be off at once, I believe he would rarely be missed; but this is not often the case, as he frequently rises so clumsily, and at the same time so near, that you cannot shoot immediately, but must await his departure, and are thus kept in a state of suspense, and sometimes of doubt, whether you will

even get a shot at all, as the direction he may take, when you are very close upon him, is always uncertain. And it not unfrequently happens, that a bird you thought as safe as bagged on rising, there being no apparent obstacle to your having the fairest shot in the world, by some extraordinary quick turn eludes all your skill. As you cannot shoot at ten or twelve yards, and as a cock often rises at this distance, you are obliged to wait, and just when you suppose you must have a certain shot, by his going either to the right or left, or straight forward, the coast being quite clear, in an instant he flies exactly towards your face, in so bungling a manner, that you could almost fancy he was wounded, or could not fly at all; and, as you turn round to bring your gun up, you either stumble, or your gun is impeded by a branch, or he turns out of sight behind a rock or a tree exactly as you pull the trigger, and you thus, in spite of yourself, shoot behind him, and he escapes; and, as an aggravation to your disappointment, all your efforts to find him again are fruitless.

But, on the other hand, it occasionally happens, that out of evil cometh good, for you not only find your lost bird, but, whilst in quest of him, a couple of others, and bag all three; and this in pursuing the direction of your lost bird over ground that you would not otherwise have tried, the two fresh

birds rising under your feet from places apparently the most unlikely, thus affording you more than compensation for your previous disappointment. It often happens, at the end of the day, when you want one more bird to make up a particular number of couples, that you find one, and flush him several times without being able to get a shot ; and after having searched in vain for more than half an hour after the last time you had flushed him, and having searched every favourable spot in the line of his flight where it was likely he might have dropped, you give up in despair, and feel somewhat vexed at not getting your last bird, and walk off homewards with your gun over your shoulder, devouring your disappointment, when up he gets off a piece of ground as bare as a road, but perhaps with a little rill in it, or one small bush on it, when down you bring him, thus appeasing your sportsman's ire, and making you fully satisfied with your day's sport.

In a rough, wild country, where there is a mixture of blackthorn, hazel, birch, ash and dwarf, scrubby oak, with rocks and heather, and where there are many steep, rugged acclivities, inaccessible to the best of beaters, good spaniels are indispensable, as it is impossible to flush cocks without them. Even tolerable spaniels would be useless in many of these places, as cocks will not rise except forced to do so by good, hard-working,

persevering dogs, who thoroughly understand their business, and will go round and under every rock and blackthorn; for so indisposed are cocks to be disturbed out of these favourite spots, that they will often settle within a few yards from where they took their flight, and it is only by the perseverance of good dogs that they can be forced to quit them, so as to afford a chance to the sportsman; and sometimes this is but an indifferent one, as they fly so low between the rocks and bushes, that the shot is quite a doubtful one.

No bird lies closer than a cock, or is more difficult to flush when he is in a cover where he intends remaining, of the nature I have just described. In fact, I have seen a spaniel catch one before he would rise, although he was for some time hunting very busily close to him, before he winded, and rushed in upon, and caught him. At other times they are very easily flushed; but in these respects they are influenced by the wind and weather, on some days being so excessively wild, that they cannot be approached within shot, except you go down wind upon them; and these occasions arise when a change of weather is about to take place, especially after a few days' frost, when a turn in the wind arrives indicating a thaw. But generally through the winter, *i. e.* during the months of November, December, and January, they will lie well. The first two months are, how-

ever, the best, although I have sometimes had excellent sport as late as February; but this depends entirely upon the nature of the season and of the country, as the peculiar weather which brings cocks to one place drives them away from another.

In England, Ireland, and in the northern and inland parts of Scotland, the cocks which arrive in November remain there so long as the weather continues mild and open; but as soon as a severe frost sets in, and extends beyond three days, the cocks move off to milder quarters; so that the western part of Scotland which adjoins the sea-coast is, during severe weather, a very favourite place of resort for cocks. The snow never lying long on this coast, nor on the adjacent grounds, nor on those sides of the covers facing the south-east, and the covers being filled with numerous springs, which are never frozen, may be the united causes of their attracting cocks in severe weather, their instinct apparently directing them to the most suitable localities.

During a severe frost, I have seen as many as forty cocks in a day; nine out of ten of them in those parts of the cover which faced the south-east. There are two obvious reasons for this preference: viz. the small comparative quantity of snow to that which is found on the other aspects; and the warmth derived from the morning and midday sun. In fact, during the short

days, the covers which have a northern aspect scarcely get any sun, and the snow lies, notwithstanding the sea air, till a thaw arrives. But even when there is no frost, I have invariably remarked, that covers with a northwest aspect are not much frequented by cocks, although apparently in every other respect suitable. Amidst the open heather, where the ground is broken, and there are a few springs, I have frequently found them. In fact, I believe a very large proportion of cocks drop amongst the heather upon the mountains, in springy ground, on their first arrival, and remain there until the severe weather drives them down into the covers.

I have already recommended spaniels for this sport, and I am convinced no dogs are so suitable; in fact, they will find more game of any sort than any other description of dog, and are most agreeable to shoot to, being such vivacious and lively companions; but they must be thoroughly broken, and kept well in subjection, or they become very mischievous and destructive of sport. An old pointer that you cannot spoil, and who will keep close to you, is an excellent accompaniment to spaniels, and will point many a cock which you would otherwise have passed. Spaniels, to do their work thoroughly well and efficiently, ought to be attended by a beater who can manage and control them, and go with them through

thick places as far as it is practicable, as there are many steep, rocky and precipitous places through which no man can pass, and which can only be thoroughly investigated by first-rate spaniels. And when you arrive at these you must always give your dogs time to work; if you hurry them you may pass many a cock.

In covers which can be beaten by men, they of course are preferable to any dogs, with one retriever to find your wounded and dead birds. This method is, however, expensive, but the advantage is great; you find almost every bird, and you are almost certain of having a fair shot within a moderate distance; which is not always the case with spaniels, as they frequently flush cocks out of distance. This, however, in a wild country, is unavoidable, as there are so many places which are inaccessible to the sportsman within shot. He has, therefore, no alternative but to send his spaniels into them, and take his chance of getting a shot; which can be generally managed if there be two guns, by one keeping with the spaniels, the other going forward in the direction to which you are beating. But if you are going down wind, the second gun had better keep in the rear, as nine birds out of ten will go up wind; so that, generally speaking, the second gun will have the best chance. When your dogs flush a cock out of distance down wind, imme-

diately stand still, and in all probability he will come straight as a line back towards you ; when you can take him either as he approaches, or let him pass you. Either is an easy shot, but the former is the easier of the two, if you have acquired the habit of shooting birds as they come towards you.

The best shot for woodcocks is No. 7. with No. 6. in the second barrel for long shots, or for other game. With No. 7., if you merely get a glimpse of the cock through the thickest cover, and hold right, you will be sure to kill. With large shot you may easily miss him ; and there is no compensating advantage for the use of large shot, as you seldom get long shots in cover : and, moreover, when you take a small bird full with it, you terribly disfigure him ; which is an annoyance to good sportsmen, who always desire to kill their birds clean. A good marker in cock shooting is invaluable, as cocks frequently drop in such singular places, that you would never think of looking for them if you had not been told where they had dropped ; and also because, when you search in the right direction, you might also, in beating at the usual place, occasionally pass them if you had not known exactly where they had been marked down ; as, after being shot at, they will sometimes lie until they are almost trod upon before they will rise, and therefore very close beating is requisite ; and

also, after being shot at, and wounded in the body, and though apparently not touched, they drop dead after a long flight. The experienced eye of the old sportsman soon, however, perceives, by the peculiar flight of the bird when he is body hit, and will observe him as long as he remains within sight; but as woodcocks soon escape from your view, it only remains to follow the line of their flight, which is generally direct when they are body hit and fall dead; still many dead birds would be lost without a good marker judiciously placed: in fact, even when you see a bird fall dead, if it be at a distance, he is very difficult to be found, although you fancied you had marked him down to an inch.

I have often seen men and dogs a long time at fault, when every one expected to pick up the bird the moment they arrived at the spot where they thought the bird must have fallen; and when at last found, all were mistaken as to the distance, although all were in line. But a bird is sometimes very difficult to be seen, especially a woodcock, when lying flat with his back only exposed to view. It is sometimes wonderful to observe how near the best of dogs will pass to dead birds without winding them; in fact, I have seen dogs run over dead birds, actually treading upon them without finding them, although at other times I have seen them wind them at a long distance. But equally

good dogs in other respects differ much in the faculty of finding dead birds. There is no difficulty in finding a running bird with a good retriever, be he either Newfoundland or spaniel; the dead bird is the only puzzle. But some Newfoundlands are wonderfully sagacious even in this respect, marking the places where the wounded and dead birds drop to a nicety, and going immediately you order them to the very spot. Spaniels I have seen nearly as good, as they have quite as good noses as the Newfoundland; but they are deficient in the sagacity of the latter.

DEER STALKING.

To the sportsman who completely and thoroughly understands it, perhaps deer stalking is the most exciting and fascinating of all sports. To pursue it successfully qualities of more than an ordinary kind are requisite; and sportsmen who might be completely successful in other pursuits might entirely fail in this, if deficient in any of the necessary qualifications.

In the first place, foresight and judgment are required before attempting to approach a distant deer, in calculating the changes of the wind in the different places through which it will be

necessary to pass, to arrive at a particular spot; as it is well known to all conversant with this subject, that, although the wind should be in one quarter, it may be in the reverse in particular inequalities of the mountains, on the same principle that back currents exist in large streams and sea-lochs. As the sense of smell in the deer is so very acute, that he would be sure to wind you at the distance of a mile if ever you chanced to be to the windward of him, too much caution in this respect cannot be exercised.

The next qualities demanded are perseverance and patience. The latter quality is so important, that without it all the others would be useless; as one moment's precipitation would lose the labour of hours, it being frequently necessary to remain for ten minutes or longer without moving an inch, merely to await the turning of the deer's head, to enable you to pass over one small spot of ground, where you would be for a moment in sight, and if seen lose your chance; and, as the sense of sight in the deer is as acute as that of smell, you cannot be too particular on this point; hence, dress becomes a subject of importance, and worthy of attention. The nearer you approach the colour of the ground over which you have to pass the better, and the cap, coat, and trousers ought to be alike. A hat of course is quite out of the question for this or *any* kind

of stalking. Dark colours are rarely suitable. A light grey or stone colour is generally as good as any. There are usually numerous rocks on the mountains, which are the theatre of your operations; and this colour, which is not at any time perceptible at any great distance, may thus easily escape notice.

Before commencing operations, make yourself thoroughly conversant with the nature of the ground over which you will have to pass, so that there be no mistake or disappointment. A good glass will be as essentially requisite as a good rifle; a judicious use of the former being preliminary to your effective use of the latter. If the deer which you are endeavouring to approach be lying down, his head will invariably be turned in that direction over which he can command the most extensive view; you must therefore take the greatest care, after having discovered his position with your glass, never to be, even in the slightest degree, within the range of his sight, as he would infallibly discover you and move off: but, whichever way his head may be turned, never for a moment advance down wind towards him, as he would instantly wind you, and your labour would be lost. If he be lying on the side of a hill, approach from above if you possibly can, never from below. You will frequently be obliged to crawl upon your hands and knees to pass a bare and difficult spot of land; but

without this trouble and great patience and perseverance you can never be successful. If you manage well, and the deer be not in an unfavourable spot, you will, by availing yourself of the above suggestions, get within a fair distance to take your shot at him.

Your ball will be most effective immediately behind the shoulder. In the event of his facing you, you had better aim at his forehead between the eyes; and if his head be slightly turned, then between the eye and the ear. But should his head be raised so as to prevent this shot being effectual, and you are apprehensive of his moving, then aim at his throat or chest. Should he not remain on the spot, nor drop immediately, you must not be disappointed, as the best-directed shot may occasionally fail in producing this effect. He may run a few, or a hundred yards, or a mile, and then fall; but you should always have a good deer-hound in the rear, ready for the pursuit, this ally being indispensably necessary to secure your complete success.

Be very particular in ascertaining to a nicety the exact charge for your rifle, as accurate shooting cannot possibly be attained without it. A little practice at a mark at various distances will be necessary to acquire this knowledge. At moderate distances you may aim almost point blank, at increased ones you must allow for the rise and fall of

the ball ; but you cannot shoot well without nerve and steadiness. Those who cannot avoid being excited will frequently experience great disappointment in the loss of the most favourable opportunities ; the only remedy is practice and experience.

The next sport to stalking is lying in wait for deer which are being driven towards you by beaters ; and this is as exciting as stalking, perhaps more so, as you see the distant deer advancing, and hear the shouts of the men, and are in breathless expectation of a herd arriving by the pass contiguous to which you are in ambush, with the hope of killing right and left ; an achievement which does not frequently fall to the lot of even the most skilful sportsmen. But still as this feat is occasionally accomplished, the hope of success must also co-exist with the opportunity, and produce no little anxiety and excitement in the breast of the zealous and keen sportsman. Indeed, I have seen very experienced sportsmen much excited at the sport, especially when any failure has occurred, owing to *mal-adresse* on the part of any of the beaters or attendants. Some are so sanguine that they arm themselves with two or three rifles ; but these extensive preparations more frequently than otherwise defeat their own object, by producing over-anxiety, and its natural consequence hurry and precipitation ; so

that the desire to do too much terminates in nothing being done well.

In awaiting the arrival of deer which are being driven towards you, you must take the greatest care from the moment they come in sight not to move an inch till you are prepared to fire; as they would instantly turn round and face the beaters, rather than approach you, so extraordinary is their instinct when danger is at hand. I have known a herd of deer charge a whole phalanx of beaters, rather than approach one person with a gun down wind near a pass. I have also known the very best chances lost, owing merely to the whimpering of the deer-hound or retriever which was in the background, the gillie having incautiously allowed him to catch sight of the advancing herd.

The largest and heaviest red-deer in Scotland are said to be on the Island of Jura. On the contiguous Island of Isla there are abundance of fallow-deer; but these, as elsewhere, are very tame and easy of access, and are unworthy of the deer-stalker's attention. This latter place is celebrated for the excellence of its whisky, although Cambleton in Cantire contends with it. Jura is remarkable for three high mountains, which are called the passes of Jura. They are supposed to be 2,420 feet above the level of the sea. Both Jura and Isla afford excellent winter shoot-

ing, there being abundance of both woodcocks and wildfowl; the covers along the coast being peculiarly adapted to the former, and the numerous bays and creeks exactly suitable to the latter.

These islands are to the west of Scotland, and within about two hours' sail of Ireland. Both islands are about the same length, Jura being twenty-six miles long, and Isla twenty-seven; the latter eighteen miles in breadth, the former only seven. The sound of Jura is about seven miles broad. Black-game frequently cross the sound to the opposite coast during the time of the corn being in stock (*i. e.* sheaves), there being little cultivated land on Jura.

Having witnessed their arrival from the sea, I can speak to the fact. The moors on Jura are in appearance as good as any in Scotland; but grouse are not abundant, the ground never having been properly preserved; and the island abounds in flying vermin of all sorts, it being a great breeding place for them, especially for the hoodies. There are some very good salmon rivers, which empty themselves into the sound.

THE ROE AND ROEBUCK.

These elegant little animals abound in many parts of Scotland, and are to be found in woods and plantations. As they are by no means wild, they can very easily be killed, either by having the woods and plantations driven, several guns having been previously placed in the passes (which are generally known to those who are acquainted with the covers); or they may be hunted by one or two couple of hounds, and waited for at their pass as they come round; but, in my humble opinion, it is most wretched sport. They lie so close at times, that you may come within a few yards of them before they will rise; so that you may shoot them easily with small shot.

When out woodcock shooting I have shot them with No. 6.; but this can only be done when you can get a near side-shot, and are able to hit them behind the shoulder. When they are going directly from you they are not easily killed, even with large shot; and ought not to be shot at, unless you have dogs to pursue them. The shot generally used by amateurs is BB, with which you may kill them at seventy or eighty yards, if you can get a side-shot. If the country were rideable, I should think, with a pack of harriers, they would show excellent sport.

In Dorsetshire, some thirty years ago, I recollect its having been tried, and I believe that it succeeded tolerably well. Some that had been turned out in a park having escaped and bred in the open country, this means of destroying them was resorted to. But I do not believe they do much damage to corn crops, as they live principally upon the young and tender branches of young trees, leaves, and clover.

They are tolerable eating, the flesh being sweet and tender; but they are never fat, and, in my opinion, very inferior to good mutton. The *cotelettes* are, however, very good, and the haunches, if larded, are eatable with a *sauce piquante*. The other parts are good for soup, which I rather fancy is the best purpose to which they can be applied. The roe is in rut from the end of October to the middle of November; and, as they go about five months and a half with young, they generally produce about the end of April or beginning of May. They sometimes have two young ones. The roebuck sheds and renews his horns every winter, and in March he may occasionally be seen rubbing them against trees, in order that he may get rid of the skin which covers them. In the second year he has two or three antlers, on the third four or five, and never more. There are a great many

roe in France in the royal forests; but particularly in Brittany, where the woods are very extensive.

DOGS.

Good sport depends so much upon good dogs, that to secure them ought to be a primary consideration with every sportsman. Little trouble and exertion are required for this purpose; and as good dogs occasion no more expense than bad ones, it is a matter of surprise that the latter should be so frequently in use as they are. Bad dogs spoil sport and occasion disappointment; they both pass by and run up game, give you long shots, diminish your pleasure, cause irritation, sometimes loss of temper, and its very frequent sequel, bad shooting.

Good sportsmen, who have time and leisure to attend to their dogs, either personally, or through the instrumentality of competent keepers, almost invariably have good dogs; bad sportsmen, seldom or never; simply because, if they happen to buy good dogs, or have them given as presents, they generally contrive to spoil them, unless they be old dogs so obstinately tenacious of their former good habits that they cannot be either induced to move after a shot be fired, till the gun be re-

loaded, or to chase a wounded hare, if ever so much excited to do so.

Now to the point. In the first instance, every beginner must buy his dogs; and there will be no difficulty in his purchasing good and well-bred ones, provided he will give a fair price. After this, the best plan will be to breed and break them; and well-bred dogs are easily broken if the proper means be adopted. Never, upon any account, buy dogs without a trial, unless you receive the most unquestionable guarantee as to their excellence. A pointer or setter may be broken at eleven or twelve months old. In breeding, take care not to breed, as it is called, "in-and-in," that is, from dogs nearly related one to another, as the produce is generally feeble and deficient in courage; rather send to any distance to breed from a dog not related, selecting for your cross a well-bred and well-made dog, and one possessing first-rate qualities. A good working dog, with good temper, first-rate nose and stanchness, good legs and feet, and breadth of chest, is one not likely to disappoint you. Work, in my opinion, is the first consideration, as all other good points, however excellent they may be, will be of little value without this quality; but there will be no difficulty in obtaining all you require if you will only give yourself the trouble to make the proper inquiries; and the

satisfaction and pleasure derivable from the possession and use of good dogs will be an ample reward for any exertion or pains you may have incurred to secure them.

As to breaking dogs, when they are about eleven or twelve months old, or perhaps earlier, as circumstances may suggest, let them be brought home from their walks and shut up in a kennel, or fastened separately to dog boxes; and let the person who is to break them take them out every day for two or three hours, so as to become thoroughly acquainted with them and on friendly terms with them; in fact, to be with them as much as possible; for more is to be done with all dogs, both young and old, by kind treatment, than by severity and harshness. Then let him endeavour to make them thoroughly docile and obedient; to know their *names*, to come instantly to call, to drop immediately to hand. *When* this is accomplished, he may show them game with an old, steady dog. It is better, at the commencement, only to take one young dog out at a time. If he be very high-spirited, wild, and inclined to chase and run in, then put on a spike collar with a long cord to it; and when you perceive him disposed to advance too rapidly, put your foot upon the cord. This check, administered a few times, will make him cautious and careful. Should he be very wild and disposed to run riot, and get out of

your reach and chase game, do not flog him; but have a boy to hold the end of the cord and check him every time he attempts to advance on your old dog, who may be either standing or drawing upon game; and this will be a sufficient and effective punishment.

In this manner I have broken the wildest setters in a week or ten days, without much interference with my sport, being out every day, and killing much game. When a young dog has felt the spike collar* once or twice, he becomes cautious, and will keep close to you; and thus, as you advance to your dogs drawing on game, or pointing at it, the young dog is afforded every opportunity of learning his business, and the boy in the rear with the cord in his hand prevents all interference with your sport, and will be ready to make him down charge every time the gun is discharged, by giving him a smart jerk with the cord should he attempt to dash forward, and repeating the same till he goes down to charge properly. When broken in this manner, dogs become very stanch, and seldom or never require subsequent correction; and it is a far easier and shorter method, than without the gun, especially if they have received, in the first instance, that preliminary instruction which I have suggested.

* In French "collier de force."

Dogs taken into the field before they have learnt obedience in any shape or way, are much more difficult to be broken; it is, in fact, beginning at the wrong end; the whip is brought into action, and much severity resorted to; and this is frequently done by keepers who do not understand their business. Give dogs plenty of work, kill game to them, and be particular not to overlook any fault, and you will have no trouble with them, if you have commenced properly with them in the first instance;—you will then find them quite ready to down charge, back, and do all that is requisite. The above is the main secret with regard to making good dogs, and keeping them so. The best of dogs, shut up in a kennel, and only worked occasionally, will commit faults, especially if they do not know the person well who shoots to them.

You cannot be too particular as to making dogs *down charge*; this is so essentially necessary to ensure good sport, that it must never be overlooked or lost sight of; it is the first act of obedience, upon which all others are founded. The sportsman will, of course, on no account stir one inch after having discharged his gun, till he has reloaded it. No dogs will down charge well if *this* be not *strictly* attended to. A good sportsman will rather lose fifty birds than move. Want of attention to this fundamental principle

in shooting, on the part of impatient and over-eager sportsmen, I believe to be the fertile cause of accident; and it is at the same time subversive of sport, and almost invariably defeats its own object.

The more work you give setters the better they will generally behave; at least, I have always found it so; and having shot many thousand head of game to setters, I have a great partiality to them. For general work for all seasons and all weather, I prefer them infinitely to pointers; they are much more hardy, will do more work, and are not so liable to become footsore, or chafed by the heather as high-bred pointers; neither are they subject to be chilled in cold weather. If the weather be hot, dry, and sultry, then it must be admitted, that pointers have the advantage on the hills; but there is rarely a lack of moisture on the moors. The best plan for those who can afford it, is to have both pointers and setters, and work them alternately, as circumstances may suggest. Three days a week are sufficient for pointers; but setters may be worked almost every day if you get the right breed. It must be borne in mind that there are many different breeds of setters, varying in size, shape, colour, and quality, but more particularly as to work. There is a large, heavy breed, very steady and stanch, with good nose, but useless on the moors,

being incapable of fatigue and very subject to lameness in the shoulder. This breed is, of course, to be scrupulously avoided. They are generally of a red and white colour. I do not mean to say that all setters of this colour are of this description, as I have met with some first-rate dogs in every respect, red and white, but they have always been large.

The breed I have found best in every respect is a light-built, small setter, with long, smooth, silky hair, much feathered about the legs, and under the tail. I had this breed for many years. Many of them were quite black, with the exception of a white spot under the neck and at the tip or end of the tail. Their produce was black, black and white, and dark red; they had capital legs and feet, and were very broad in the chest. No day was too long for them; and when in their prime, they could work every day in the week, and I never recollect them either foot-sore or lame. They were remarkable for stanchness as well as speed. Some of them invariably dropped when they found their game, others pointed and only dropped occasionally. Some that I bred backed one another instinctively the very first time I took them out, before a head of game had been killed to them, and gave hardly any trouble in breaking.

I once shot over some setters, many years ago, which came from Sir John Shelley's, the very

best I ever saw. They were very fast, most indefatigable, had capital noses, carried their heads well, and found their game at a very great distance. These dogs could hunt every day, and no day was too long for them. They were large, but beautifully made and very handsome; colour, black and white; much feathered about the legs and tail. Dogs of this description are more suitable for grouse shooting than for any other sport; in fact, their speed is thrown away in field shooting, except it be in those districts where the fields are from fifty to a hundred acres; but pointers, perhaps, are better calculated for partridge shooting, as they hunt closer and more cautiously than setters, the latter being apt occasionally to run over birds if too fresh, and not kept under by sufficient work, especially when they are young.

For pheasant shooting, where they are thin, and not over-preserved, so as to make dogs not requisite, there is no dog equal to the Sussex spaniel; but in these times of preserving, pheasants are generally so numerous, that a few beaters and a retriever are all that are required. In strong covers, furze, or thick hedge-rows, spaniels afford excellent sport; very little game escapes their close hunting and excellent noses, but a relay of them is necessary, as they will seldom work throughout the day, especially if the covers are

strong and thick, and a little wet at starting in the morning, and they take so much more out of themselves than any other dogs at the commencement of the day, being more eager and vivacious; their subsequent melancholy aspect when done up towards evening, affords a very striking contrast to their lively and sprightly appearance in the morning. For woodcocks there is no dog equal to them. A steady old pointer or setter may be made good for cocks, but they will never find half the quantity that spaniels will flush. This I have found from experience, having tried both on alternate days in a good cock country, the result being always most decidedly in favour of spaniels. No bird lies closer than a cock when he is not wild; consequently, a low-scented, close-hunting dog must have the advantage, in addition to his inferior size, enabling him to get under bushes and other places where a pointer or setter, even if disposed, could not so easily pass; but close as woodcocks lie on particular days, they are sometimes very wild; and when this is found to be the case, it is advisable to beat down wind as much as possible, otherwise you may not get a shot.

When dogs are working hard, it is of the utmost importance to have their food ready for them immediately on their return home, as they will then eat with appetite what they require, be-

fore they get upon their benches ; whereas, were the food not ready, they would retire to their beds, and be indisposed to move even when the food was brought ; and if forced from their benches, would soon return without eating half the quantity requisite. The consequence of this neglect and inattention, if persisted in, would be a falling off in condition, and inability to do regular work. Some dogs are very shy feeders, and require much attention on the part of those whose duty it is to take care of them ; and it will be frequently necessary not only to feed these alone, but to humour and coax them, and sometimes feed them with the hand. By the neglect of this many a valuable dog is lost, the feeder being indifferent about his dogs, and merely placing the food in the kennel, leaving each dog to take his chance. The sportsman must either see his dogs fed himself, or have a trustworthy person to look after them ; otherwise, he will meet with serious disappointment.

Dogs are easily kept in good condition by judicious and careful management ; but, when once neglected, quickly fall off, and do not readily regain condition. There is no part of a keeper's duty to which the vigilant eye of the master ought to be more constantly and unremittingly directed, than that which involves the feeding of his dogs and other minor attentions to them ;

such as cleanliness of the kennel, a constant supply of clean water, and dry, clean straw. Upon attention to these particulars depend their health, strength, and efficiency in the field. The unwholesome atmosphere of a dirty, neglected kennel must impair the sense of smell; hence the necessity of the greatest attention to cleanliness where pointers and setters are concerned, their efficiency depending so much upon the organ of smelling, and its healthy condition.

If a dog returns home apparently tender upon his feet, they should be washed with warm pot-liquor. If a foot be sore, the dog should on no account be taken out till he be quite recovered; a few days' rest, which is the only certain remedy, with the assistance of his own tongue, which is more healing than anything that can be applied, will soon restore him; if, on the contrary, you persevere in working him, you may lame him to such an extent that he may be useless for weeks. When the soreness is slight, and you cannot manage without the dog, a boot may be tried; it must be made of thick, soft, pliable leather, fastened by a lace. I have known many a dog work well in this manner without injury to his foot. The only difficulty is to fasten it in such a manner that it will not come off. Cessation from work is, however, the only safe plan; the opposite course frequently not only produces

protracted lameness, but fever, and general disability. Stimulants are sometimes used with effect in incipient cases, but will be of no avail except accompanied by rest. The stimulants usually recommended are sulphate of zinc, which may be used alone in a diluted form, or oil of vitriol, with some tincture of myrrh.

DISEASES IN DOGS.—THE DISTEMPER.

Although there are many elaborate works on canine pathology containing all necessary instruction as to remedies, cure, &c., so that any remarks on the subject by a non-professional person might appear superfluous, still as a work on shooting might be considered incomplete which did not contain a few remedies for some of the most prevalent and troublesome complaints to which dogs are liable, I will afford such information as I possess, accompanied by remedies which I have found, from long experience, to be most successful. With regard to the distemper I can however offer no certain remedy, neither do I think that any has been discovered, although many profess to have an infallible specific. To such I would merely observe, that it would only be bene-

volent on their part to communicate their knowledge to the world, and not keep it hid under a bushel. This disease is as fatal to young dogs as the small-pox used formerly to be to children before the invaluable discovery of vaccination was made by Dr. Jenner: it is however more partial, being more fatal to some breeds of dogs than to others. The greyhound suffers severely from it, and is with difficulty reared, requiring the utmost skill and the most unremitting and constant attention during the progress of the malady.

Another characteristic of the disease is its being more severe in some seasons than others; and this peculiarity is applicable to a whole district, so that it appears in the light of an epidemic. I have lost many young dogs from it, especially greyhounds, and never had the good fortune to find any medicine on which I could rely with certainty. Vaccination has been recommended as a preventive, and many affirm having tried it with complete success: the precaution might therefore be resorted to; for, if it does not completely succeed, it may render the attacks of distemper less violent; it is at all events worth trying, as it demands but little trouble.

Although the distemper presents itself in various forms and in different degrees of virulence, still there are always present certain infallible characteristic symptoms; and when those exhibit

themselves, some remedies ought instantly to be resorted to. If in the winter, the dog ought to be kept in some dry, warm, comfortable place, and immediately separated from his companions, as it is unquestionably contagious, although there may be an occasional exception. The first symptoms are generally heaviness of manner, loss of appetite, and want of energy and spirit, so that when spoken to the dog hardly notices you: this is accompanied by a dulness and weakness of the eyes, and subsequently a certain huskiness of the throat comes on, with cough,—all symptoms indicative of incipient inflammation,—followed by a discharge from the nose.

In the first instance I should recommend an aperient in the shape of castor oil: a supply of “lap” ought to be at hand, to be given in small quantities, but frequently. If the disease advances, then strong remedies may be resorted to, and there is none better than one recommended by Dr. Taylor of Yarmouth,—gum gamboge, 20 grains, white hellebore powder, 30 grains, made into nine pills, and one given every morning. This is a very strong and powerful medicine; and as hellebore partakes in some degree of the dangerous character of calomel, every care must be taken that the dog be not exposed to cold or damp. The dog’s food ought to be some warm liquid, either gruel, broth, or milk. It will be well

to vary these, increasing the strength of the food as the dog improves.

As there is a great deal of inflammation attending the disease, especially of all those membranes which produce mucus, the stomach will be constantly overloaded, so that the dog will find a great relief from an emetic being administered: the ordinary one consists of equal portions of calomel and tartar emetic, one grain each, more or less, according to the size of the dog. Sometimes common salt will answer every purpose. A Frenchman told me he had cured a dog of his, by giving him a quid of tobacco occasionally, with plenty of warm broth; the tobacco operates both as an emetic and as a purgative; but what would answer in one case might fail in another.

The general remedies which I suggest are constant care and unremitting attention: if in winter, warmth and cleanliness at all times, cooling medicine, gentle emetics, plenty of nourishing liquids, increasing in strength as the dog amends. Calomel may be given, from 6 to 8 grains, dependent on the size of the dog: this should be given at night, and on the following morning some castor oil, with or without some syrup of buckthorn with a little jalap in it, as circumstances may suggest. But rhubarb may be given with the calomel, in which case no further aperient will be required on the following morning. In proportion of 3 to 1 grain of calomel, this re-

medy, in moderate occasions, will sometimes succeed with the aid of a gentle emetic. No man who keeps dogs ought to be without castor oil and syrup of buckthorn : they are both most useful, and at the same time most safe remedies ; and there ought to be an extra quart of syrup of buckthorn, with an ounce and a half of jalap in it. A tablespoonful of the latter, with a spoonful of castor oil, is the best and safest medicine that can be given to a dog at any time. Nothing is better for pointers and setters before the commencement of the shooting season.

There are numerous symptoms of a more violent and desperate character, which succeed to those I have mentioned, when the disease is not arrested in its progress by ordinary remedies, so that the dog appears to be almost mad, has fits, foams at the mouth, and will attempt to bite any person who approaches. When these supervene a dog is rarely saved, so that I will make no attempt to prescribe for those extreme cases, but refer those of my readers who are curious on the subject to the several elaborate treatises which have been published by scientific writers on Canine Pathology. It will be sometimes necessary to use a lotion for cleansing the dog's nose, in which case $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. of sugar of lead, dissolved in a pint of water, may answer the purpose. Mr. Beckford recommended Turbith's mineral being given in in-

creased quantities on three successive mornings, viz., 8, 16, and 32 grains; this remedy must be accompanied by a plentiful supply of warm broth.

MANGE.

As one receipt is as good as a thousand, if it be an infallible one, I will give only one, which I have never known to fail, even in the very worst cases. It consists of 6 oz. hellebore powder, 12 oz. sulphur vivum, 2 oz. spirits of turpentine, 1 quart of train-oil. Two or three days before this application, some sulphur and antimony ought to be given, or even sulphur alone, and as much milk as possible, with oatmeal porridge, but no flesh or greaves. This mixture must be well rubbed in with the hand, under the shoulder, and upon the inside of the dog's thighs. It ought to be applied in the morning, upon an empty stomach. If administered after a dog has eaten, it will immediately make him sick.

As it is a very powerful remedy, and acts upon the system, the dog must be kept warm and dry, and not exposed for several days. The effect of the dressing will be visible for two or three days subsequently. On the following morning, a dose of castor oil and syrup of

buckthorn may be given, and the dog ought to have some broth instead of his usual food. If some whey can be had, it is one of the best things you can give a dog after being dressed for the mange. The aperient dose may be repeated after an interval of two days; or equal portions of sulphur and nitre may be given, if it be preferred; or merely sulphur,—a tablespoonful, in some warm milk, being a very cooling medicine. I have seldom found two dressings necessary, except in very bad cases.

To keep dogs clean during the summer months, sulphur, with antimony, ought frequently to be given in their food. It is also a good plan to cut up a cabbage, and boil it with the flesh or greaves twice a week. Dogs are fond of this, and when they are doing no work it is most beneficial to them; and even when in work in the autumn, once a week would do good, especially when much flesh or greaves have been given with the meal. A few handfuls of salt must invariably be thrown into the boiler whilst the food is preparing.

In mild cases of the mange, brimstone alone will effect a cure, especially if plenty of milk can be had, and the dog have nothing in addition beyond oatmeal porridge. A tablespoonful twice or three times weekly will suffice.

WORMS.

Dogs are subject to three different descriptions of worms, all bad and adverse to health and good condition. The tape-worm is the most injurious: there are two others, called ascarides and teres.

The moment either of these are discovered they ought to be dislodged, as no dog can remain in condition, and do his work, whilst he is infected by them. To the practised and experienced eye of the vigilant and attentive sportsman, the altered appearance of the dog's coat soon discloses the presence of the enemy, if it has not been discovered in any other way. A good dose of castor oil, upon an empty stomach, will sometimes dislodge and remove them. Two large tablespoonfuls, in a basin of warm milk, I have known to have the desired effect,—the dog, of course, kept fasting for a few hours subsequently. If this does not succeed, then powdered glass or tin-filings may be tried, as much as will lie upon a sixpence, rolled up in lard or butter. Should these fail, then I can recommend a more potent remedy, which has never disappointed me; and that is spirits of turpentine. Two teaspoonfuls of this, on an empty stomach, will kill and remove worms of any kind. This may be given in a small bladder—a roebuck's, for instance. The quantity is introduced into the bladder; and this being fas-

tened, and then well oiled, is easily slipped down a dog's throat, one person keeping the dog's mouth well open, with the tongue out, the other administering the remedy. If no vehicle in the shape of a bladder of any kind can be found, then give the turpentine in some oil of olives. The dog ought to be kept fasting for ten or twelve hours: after this let him have some broth. Two days subsequently, there will be no harm in giving some castor oil and syrup of buckthorn.

FOOD FOR DOGS.—THE METHOD OF PREPARING IT.

The food generally used for hounds is oatmeal or barleymeal, with horseflesh. The former is preferable, being of a less heating quality, and cheaper. They require preparing in a different manner. Oatmeal requires boiling; barley meal scalding. If the former be made with care, and in the proper manner, there will be a great saving in meal, and the food will be more nutritious than if it were made carelessly and in haste; and as the manner in which it has been prepared can easily be detected by the master's eye, I will state how the porridge ought to be made, and the appearance which it ought to exhibit when

properly manufactured, together with certain infallible indications when it has been carelessly made. These particulars, trifling as they may appear, will interest those who take a pleasure in looking after their dogs themselves.

In the first place, if flesh is to be used with the meal, it ought to be boiled in a boiler of sufficient size to hold food for two days' consumption of the kennel. If joints are to be boiled, the bones ought to be broken in several places before being put into the boiler. When the flesh is thoroughly boiled, the bones, and those lumps of meat which are not reduced to pieces, may be taken out with a flat iron, open at intervals,—*i. e.* a strainer, made for the purpose,—the remaining bits to be reduced to shreds with a sort of iron rake. When this is done, if the soup boils again, but not before, the oatmeal may be sprinkled in gradually, the maker continually stirring the whole with a small instrument made specially for the purpose. He will persevere in this operation till he finds the porridge sufficiently thick; and if it be perfectly made, and the flesh properly distributed, which will be visible by the glutinous and gelatinous appearance of the surface, the fire may then be withdrawn, and the food left to cool.

The quantity required for the day's consumption may be removed in a few hours, and placed in the feeding troughs to cool. The remainder, if kept

covered by the lid of the boiler, will be sufficiently warm for next day's use. If the porridge be properly made, it will be thick, glutinous, and of equal consistency, free from lumps, and, when cold, can be cut out with a spade or shovel, kept for the purpose. If this glutinous character be wanting, and there be lumps of meal, you may conclude that the porridge is badly made, having been manufactured carelessly, and in haste; the meal having been thrown in in large quantities, whereby the mixture is not only not so nutritive, but one-third more meal has been employed than was necessary.

To prepare barleymeal, the soup, after having been made as that above mentioned, must be poured, when boiling, upon the meal, stirring it, at the same time, till well mixed; when this is done, it may then be left to cool. It will swell and increase considerably in bulk, if it has been properly made. The feeder ought to take care to mix the flesh as equally with the meal as he possibly can. The lumps of boiled flesh which have been removed from the boiler may be reserved for those dogs which may happen to be low in condition, or who are bad feeders. Any large lumps adhering to bones, not wanted, may be reboiled. Where there are many dogs in a kennel, great care must be taken that no bones get accidentally into the food, as these would

produce quarrels and fights, and serious consequences.

The shy feeders, and those low in condition, ought to be fed alone, before the other dogs are allowed to commence. In a kennel of hounds each hound is called in by name, according to the judgment of the huntsman and feeder, and the utmost discipline adopted in this respect, otherwise his whole kennel would be in a state of confusion. If hounds were fed *ad libitum*, many would be overfed, and others half-starved. The effective management of a pack of hounds in the field is much influenced by the good discipline which is maintained in the kennel.

There is a wonderful difference in the feeding of dogs. Some are so voracious and expeditious that they fill themselves, in two or three minutes, so that they can scarcely walk to their benches. Others require ten minutes, and encouragement, and coaxing into the bargain. The food ought always to be ready the moment hounds or other hard-working dogs enter the kennel, so that they can satisfy their hunger before they get upon their benches. It interferes sadly with a dog's comfort, and with his condition, to allow him to take partial repose on his bench before he be fed. In fact, many dogs, when very tired, will not get off their benches to feed, if they have not been fed in the first instance, unless they be forced off, and then they

will only take a partial and insufficient supply, being stiff and cold, and in a hurry to return to their rest. In a well-managed kennel, the utmost attention is paid to these essentials.

The same food will answer for all shooting dogs when at work, although a change is beneficial to pointers and setters, in the shape of damaged biscuits, milk, and any scraps from the kitchen. However, when pointers and setters work hard on the moors, they must have strong nutriment to sustain them; and horseflesh, if thoroughly boiled, and mixed in moderate quantities with the porridge, will not interfere with their noses. If horseflesh cannot be had, then greaves may be used; these ought to be boiled by themselves for a length of time, and added to the oatmeal porridge, after it has been made in the usual manner: if the porridge be cold, then the greaves can be reheated before being mixed, as working dogs ought always to have moderately warm food on returning home after a hard day's fatigue.

Before greaves are put into a boiler to be reduced, they ought to be broken into small pieces and carefully examined before used, as there are often sharp pieces of bones, bits of wood, and pins in them, which, if not removed, and accidentally swallowed, might prove very injurious, if not fatal.

The average price of oatmeal of the very best

quality (in Scotland) is from 15 to 16 shillings the bole; the bole contains 8 stones, a stone being 16 lbs., — consequently a bole ought to contain 128 lbs. This meal is made from oats which have been kiln-dried previous to grinding, every particle of the husk being subsequently removed; and, as it is precisely the same meal which is universally used in Scotland for porridge, of course requires looking after. Greaves are about 12 shillings the cwt. With greaves and meal, a kennel of pointers, spaniels, setters, and retrievers, may be kept at from 12 to 14 pence per head per week.

During the summer months dogs will not require such strong food as when they are at work; the porridge may be made much thinner, and very little flesh or greaves employed; and, if a good garden be at hand, a drumhead cabbage occasionally, cut up into small pieces, boiled in the soup, will be very beneficial: twice a week will not be too often; it will keep the dogs cool, and prevent constipation, to which some dogs are subject when kept at home. They should, however, have exercise every other day; and if they can conveniently be let out every day, if only for a few minutes, in a grass-field, it will be attended with good effects.

During the summer months, whether dogs exhibit any sign of mange or not, they should all be once thoroughly dressed, and a little nitre, sulphur, and antimony occasionally given. The ken-

nel should likewise be thoroughly cleansed, and whitewashed all over with a mixture of lime and water, not omitting the benches, which should be moveable by hinges, so that no dirt whatever be allowed to accumulate underneath them.

Great care must be taken that there is always a constant supply of fresh water, with a few pieces of brimstone at the bottom of the vessel; and I must not omit to add, that there should always be an abundant supply of salt in the kennel, to be used at all times in the food. Dogs enjoy their food more with salt, and its use is essential to their health.

Although I have partially alluded to the treatment of hounds in a kennel, having had more particularly in view the arrangements necessary for the management and care of shooting dogs, I have only recommended the use of one boiler, which will suffice for at least twenty dogs; in fact, with twenty couple of harriers, I have known one boiler answer every purpose: in a large kennel of foxhounds, of course two boilers will be required, one for the preparation of meal, the other for the boiling of flesh; but the same system which I have before suggested must be adopted. The great advantage of the two boilers is, that you can better regulate the consistency of the food after it is made, by the addition of either liquid or solid, as circumstances may render advisable, and, by one being

kept hot and the other cold, can also manage that the food be exactly the proper warmth when hounds return home, which, as I have previously intimated, is important: however, a good man in the kennel, who has twenty couple of hounds to attend to, will rarely be at fault with one boiler. These matters of detail merely require method with regular and assiduous attention. A man who in any way neglects his dogs, ought immediately to be discharged.

I cannot close this chapter without again insisting upon the great importance of the strictest cleanliness being maintained in a kennel of pointers and setters: this is essential to the nicety of their noses, and as sport much depends upon this particular, every sportsman will do well to see that his kennel is kept as it should be.

THE METHOD OF TEACHING DOGS TO BRING THEIR GAME ON LAND AND FROM THE WATER, ADOPTED IN FRANCE.

No French chasseur considers his *chien d'arret* of any value unless he brings his game both by land and water, and every small town in

France swarms with chasseurs; hence, it may be readily imagined that several persons in each locality gain their living by instructing dogs in this particular. In several French towns where I have resided there were three or four persons who devoted their time and ingenuity, “*a faire dresser les chiens à bien rapporter à terre et à l'eau.*” The price for this instruction, when completed, was 50 francs, or 2*l.*, besides 5 or 6 francs a month *pour la nourriture*. A dog can be taught to bring by land at any season of the year, but to bring from the water the summer is the only suitable time. It requires about two months to complete a dog's education in both qualifications. A good hand will break half a dozen dogs in the same period of time but not more, as he must devote two hours a day to each dog.

I have made use of the term *chien d'arret*, which literally means pointer, but is applied in France to all dogs that point their game: it would have been a misnomer, in our sense of the word, to have made use of the term pointer, as we understand by it a particular breed of dog, whereas the *chien d'arret* of France is almost a nondescript. It is true he points; but he embodies and combines every species of dog, and it is difficult to say to which breed he bears the closest resemblance and affinity,—something of the *chien griffon*, pointer, sheep-dog, setter, and poodle being

occasionally discernible. Some few French gentlemen chasseurs, who are particular as to their dogs, have English pointers and setters, but *les bourgeois*, who form the greater portion of the French sporting community, possess this mixed race of dog.

To point game is, however, in the chasseur's estimation, a secondary consideration to the fetching and carrying perfectly,—as these dogs are valuable for the winter's sport, being used for duck-shooting, and, from being taught with the spike collar, never refuse water in the coldest weather.

The next virtue in the *chien d'arret* is speed; one, therefore, that can catch a wounded hare by chasing, however long he may be absent, is considered invaluable: hence every dog of this description is taught to chase, especially hares, and "down charge" is an unknown virtue.

On my first going to France many years since, having taken up my abode in a part of the country suitable for sporting, I was desirous of purchasing a dog or two, to commence operations. A Frenchman brought me one for trial, which he stated to be a *chien d'arret de la première qualité*. The dog appeared to combine the three breeds of pointer, setter, and sheep-dog, and was very long in the legs; he had been *dressé* for both *l'arret et le rapport*. We went out into the open country in quest of game, to put the dog's virtues

to the test: he worked tolerably well, but I thought him rather slow, and made this remark to the owner. His reply was, "attendez un moment, Monsieur, je vous en prie, jusqu'à nous trouvons un lièvre, et vous verrez s'il peut courir ou non." We very soon found a hare, and the *chien d'arrêt* did certainly surprise me by his speed, and was soon out of sight, the Frenchman continually exclaiming, "vous voyez à present." He however returned in about ten minutes, when the Frenchman remarked that if the hare had only been a *trois quart*, instead of an old one, the dog would certainly have caught it and brought it back; and he appeared delighted at the opportunity which had occurred of the dog's giving proof of this valuable qualification. He was, however, rather surprised, when I told him that a pointer in England would either be shot or hung who acted in this manner. This dog, however, pointed remarkably well, and was very good at snipes, which abounded. I therefore purchased him for the sum asked, sixty francs, and found him very useful,—his chasing propensities not being very detrimental to my sport, as hares were very scarce; and I stopped him from chasing birds by giving him a small dose of snipe shot when in *flagrante delicto*, and I have seldom found this remedy fail, a second dose being rarely necessary: of course care must be taken never to shoot at a dog

obliquely, but when he is proceeding directly from you, so as to hit him in the hind quarters, and with small shot, at about sixty yards. I must now return from this short digression to the method of instruction adopted *pour le rapport*.

The dog-breakers like the dogs to be about ten or eleven months old before they commence instructing them. The man in the first instance makes the dog thoroughly acquainted with him, and leads him about with the spike collar on for several days before he gives him one lesson. There are two cords to this collar,—one to lead the dog by, the other to inflict punishment, when necessary, by tightening the collar, by which operation the spikes are forced into the dog's neck. The man is provided with a piece of wood about 9 or 10 inches in length, and 6 inches in circumference, round like a rolling-pin, with two small pegs through each end, crossing one another, and projecting about an inch, so that the round part does not touch the ground when the *ensemble* is thrown down, thereby admitting of being easily taken up by the dog's teeth when he is disposed to do so. The first lesson consists in placing this piece of wood in the dog's mouth, the cord from the collar being brought round it in such a manner that he cannot easily eject it from his mouth; but on every occasion of his making the attempt, he receives a sharp jerk from

the collar, and if the wood has fallen, it is replaced, and the man leads the dog about with it in his mouth.

After having taught him to carry this implement about without attempting to drop it, he next places it on the ground, and endeavours to make him pick it up. To accomplish this the dog receives a considerable quantity of severe pricks with the collar, and the man's patience and assiduity are put to the test: but, after succeeding in this point, the progress is more easy and rapid; the implement is first thrown a short distance, the interval being gradually increased, — the dog's energy, activity, and disposition to obey being constantly stimulated with the spike collar. At first he obeys with reluctance, but subsequently with alacrity, from fear of punishment, as a moment's hesitation is rewarded with an instantaneous jerk of the collar; and this correction is invariably administered to all dogs who hesitate in picking up the bit of wood, or who, after having secured it, do not instantly return. The advantage of this well-timed punishment is found subsequently in a dog's never mouthing or dwelling upon his game after he has picked it up, but returning instantly,—the impression never being effaced.

I had several English setters of a first-rate breed, broken by one man,—and they all brought their game perfectly, without even disturbing a feather,

and returning the instant they picked it up. The setters which were "forced" to bring in this manner I taught subsequently to stand back &c., &c. I had no trouble with them whatever, the application of the spike collar having made them perfectly docile and submissive.

When the dog under instruction will bring the *bloquet* perfectly at all distances within the length of the cord, the cord is tied loosely round his neck, and the *bloquet* is thrown to greater distances, and the dog generally obeys; but in case of any resistance, the cord is immediately resumed, and the dog is rewarded by a series of severe jerks, till he finally becomes perfect *pour le rapport par terre*. Then follows the second course of instruction by water, which is not so easy as might be supposed, as some dogs evince a great indisposition to obedience in this respect, especially smooth-haired pointers; but there is no failure as to ultimate success with the spike collar, no matter what breed the dog be of, and a dog, when once perfectly taught in this manner, never refuses water in the coldest day.

The trainer generally in the first instance resorts to some piece of shallow water as the field of his preliminary instructions, and he first commences by dropping the *bloquet* in near the edge; and there is frequently a severe contest between the man and dog, to make the latter

faire le premier pas. Having succeeded in this, he throws the *bloquet* gradually further and further; but as he occasionally meets with determined disobedience when he chances to throw it prematurely too far, he is obliged to take his shoes and stockings off, and walk into the water; hence the selection of a shallow place for these early operations. By dint of perseverance, the dog's education is perfected in about a month. I had several setters broken in this manner, and they never refused water in any weather, nor required in the slightest degree stimulating to fetch their game, but, on the contrary, were eager to do so, and I scarcely ever lost a head of game with them.

Dogs that bring their game, certainly appear to me to enjoy the sport more than those who do not, and are indispensably necessary in a marshy country for snipe and duck shooting. It would be difficult to make dogs used for this purpose and in this manner, "down charge" strictly, as they almost invariably mark down the game that is killed, and like, if not restrained, to go immediately to the spot for it. I have seen a dog on one or two occasions, returning with a snipe in his mouth, point at a live snipe, the dead snipe not having prevented him from winding the living one.

SOME SUGGESTIONS

TO

THOSE WHO HAVE MOORS AND OTHER SHOOTINGS TO LET,
WITH ADVICE TO THOSE WHO WISH TO RENT THEM.

Being an advocate for fair-play, I will offer a few suggestions, which I trust may be as beneficial to those who have shootings to let as to those who are desirous of renting them. The interests of the two parties are so intimately blended together, that any suggestion protective of the rights of the former cannot fail to be advantageous and beneficial to the latter. When these interests, which ought to be mutual, are disregarded by the unfair and greedy sportsman, or violated by the dishonest gamekeeper, both parties subsequently suffer, and great vexation and disappointment is the natural result.

Many sportsmen who have taken moors on the good faith of agents, have been terribly disappointed on the 12th of August. Some instances have occurred where the best of hills have been almost entirely cleared of grouse, to the amazement and unutterable vexation of those who have come from a distance, at a great expense, with friends, dogs, and servants, — the rent having been paid in advance : and yet it was partly their own fault, not to have ascertained the exact condition

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of the ground, through the instrumentality of a competent person, before closing with the agent. The latter may have acted with perfect good faith, and himself have been deceived; for the hills may have been reduced to this state on the last year of the tenancy of the previous occupant by the dishonesty of the gamekeeper, — who, having remained on the ground after the party left, may have availed himself of the opportunity to kill and destroy by every means in his power, both fair and foul, by the gun and springes by day, and with nets at night.

To guard against such foul work, I would recommend the use of the form of lease which follows this chapter, with a few additional clauses. First, if the ground be let in the month of March, that the quantity of game be ascertained by competent persons, and it be agreed that the same amount be left at the end, or expiration of the lease. Secondly, that no lease be granted for a shorter period than three years. Thirdly, that no game be killed except in a fair and sportsman-like manner. Fourthly, that, on no consideration, any gamekeeper or hired person be allowed to shoot or kill game on the last season-year of the tenancy. In case of infraction of any of these conditions, especially of the last, there should be a heavy penalty, as two years' rent would be an inadequate compensation for the damage which

an adept in villany and mischief would occasion in the last year of the tenancy, if left on the ground without restrictions, after the party had removed,—the pretext for his remaining being, that he might occasionally send his master a box of grouse.

There should also be a further condition, making the party renting the moor responsible for the conduct of the keepers; and in the event of any dispute arising at any time respecting the game, that either party be empowered to demand a reference, to come off within fifteen days; and in the event of the referees disagreeing, an umpire to be appointed by them, whose decision shall be final.

If conditions of this stringent, but necessary, character were introduced into all leases of moors, considerable disappointment would be prevented, and the fair and liberal sportsman would neither be sacrificed by foul play or greediness on the one hand, nor by the knavery of dishonest keepers on the other; for there are persons who take moors as well as keepers who ought to protect them, and against whom precautions are equally necessary to be adopted. These are such as think themselves fully justified in the last year of their tenancy, without any grateful feeling for the good sport they have enjoyed, or without the slightest consideration for the landlord, or for those who

may be subsequently tenants, in cutting down the game as closely as they possibly can,—and this not so much for the sport as for the profit derivable from the sale of game. Restrictions as to the sale of game I think both unnecessary and unfair, as the tenant is fairly entitled to dispose of the produce of his ground in any manner he may think proper; and where very heavy expenses are incurred in preserving, a portion of the game may be reasonably applied to meet them. If moors are once well stocked, well looked after, and the vermin kept under, no fair sporting will ever injure them. Some proprietors limit the number of guns; but, with the conditions already named, such restriction is altogether unnecessary.

I will now endeavour to give a few precautionary hints to those who wish to rent moors. If it be possible, never take a moor later than the months of February or March; for two reasons: the first is, because, as grouse pair in the month of March, you can easily, through the medium of a competent person and a brace of good dogs, make a fair estimate of the stock of birds on the ground; and in the next place, if that be satisfactory, and you decide on becoming tenant, you will have the best months in the year for the destruction of vermin which may be on the ground,—without which necessary operation the best prospects of sport might be seriously interfered with, espe-

cially if there be any accumulation of vermin arising from previous neglect; but in any case, if there be a good stock of game on the ground, there will always be a certain amount of vermin to be disposed of in the months of February, March, and April. Cats, polecats, stoats, and weasels, can only be kept under by regular trapping during these months,—and although hawks and other destructive birds can be destroyed at any season, the spring of the year, before they breed, is the most advantageous time; you will then get rid of a generation of enemies, and protect your game when breeding, which is most important. I will not say more on this subject here, as I have treated it fully in a chapter specially devoted to it.

Never take moors in June or July, unless you know them well, and are thoroughly satisfied as to the stock of game. You cannot try them at this period of the year with dogs; and if you take them, relying on the good faith of the agent, or on their previous high reputation, you may be woefully disappointed, for reasons which I have already given at the commencement of this chapter; but if you have no alternative, then send some competent person, upon whom you can depend, to go over the ground, and question the shepherds and gillies, and obtain all possible information; especially ascertain who was the pre-

vious tenant, as this may be important, and be a clue to your obtaining the information you desire.

Although an experienced keeper, in this way, and by going over the ground carefully, might form some estimate as to the quantity of grouse, by certain infallible indications of their presence, still it might be far from an accurate one; but as it is the only course which can be pursued at this season of the year, it must on no account be neglected. Be sure to have most stringent conditions as to the burning of the heather, as without these your best prospects of sport may be completely destroyed. All shepherds will burn more than they ought to burn, especially if they are the servants of a tenant farmer, and not of the landlord, and they will always have a ready-made excuse for the excess. Your safety, therefore, as regards this practice, is *solely* in the responsibility of the landlord; the quantity to be burnt each year must be distinctly stated, determined, and agreed on, in your lease, and a heavy penalty attached to any excess,—as your sport may be destroyed for three or four years by any reckless or extensive burning. The burning generally takes place in the month of March. If the weather be dry and the wind high, the conflagration proceeds rapidly, and as the shepherds generally select the night for the commencement of

their operations, your keepers and watchers must be on the alert. No heather can be legally burnt after the 10th of April; the penalty for each offence subsequent to that period is five pounds. Heather ought only to be burnt in small patches, and not in whole districts, as is frequently done; in which case the grouse are not only driven off the ground, but those bred contiguously to the denuded spots more easily become victims of birds of prey, by their opportunities of sheltering themselves when pursued being decreased. On moors where there are many bare places, packs bred near them will always be found to be reduced to a very small number by the 12th of August.

A very assiduous and attentive keeper, who had had the charge of extensive moors for many consecutive years, and who was constantly on his ground, told me he had invariably observed this result,—notwithstanding his having been as successful as any man I ever met with, during a long experience, in the destruction of vermin of all sorts. This circumstance is partly explained by the fact, that hawks, coming from any contiguous ground, will return to spots day after day, where they have once been successful in taking game; so that a keeper, however much he may be on the alert, may lose several young birds before he may get a favourable opportunity of destroying the enemy. The keeper to whom I have above

alluded, I have known remain on his ground all night, in order that he might be in concealment at daybreak, when a falcon or hen harrier was in question. His house being at a distance, and a sea-water loch intervening, made him prefer the occasional adoption of this plan to going home and returning in the morning; but it was, of course, during the short nights of the summer months. His perseverance was sometimes put to the test, but he seldom failed.

FORM OF LEASE FOR SHOOTINGS.

It is contracted and agreed between A. B. Esq., of Grouse Hall, Perthshire, on the one part, and C. D. Esq., of Pall Mall, London, on the other part, in manner following (that is to say) : the said A. B. hereby lets to the said C. D. and his heirs, but excluding assignees and subtenants, without the spécial consent of the proprietor in writing (the proprietor not being bound to assign any reason for withholding such consent), and that for the period of five years, from and after the first day of May, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-three, the exclusive right by himself, or others having his authority, of killing game over the whole of the farms and moors of _____, in the parish of _____,

belonging to the said A. B.; for which causes, on the other part, the said C. D. obliges himself and his heirs, executors, and successors, conjunctly and severally, without the benefit of discussion, to pay to the said A. B. or his foresaids, at the Mansion House, Grouse Hall, or at such place as the proprietor may from time to time appoint, the sum of one hundred and fifty pounds sterling of yearly rent; the first year's rent to be payable on the signing of these presents, the second year's rent on the first day of May, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-four, the third year's rent on the first day of May, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-five, the fourth year's rent on the first day of May, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-six, and the fifth year's rent on the first day of May, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-seven, with one-fifth part more of each payment in case of failure, and the legal interest of each year's rent, from and after the time when the same becomes due, during the non-payment thereof; and the said C. D. hereby stipulates and engages that he shall care for and protect the game in a fair and proper manner, encourage the different breeds, and in no event shall he be entitled to extirpate or entirely destroy the same; and that he shall not kill more game during the last year of his possession than, having reference to its judicious management, he has killed or ought to have killed in previous years; and in the event of any difference

of opinion arising between landlord and tenant in respect of the mode of the management of the game, the same shall be referred to two neutral persons of skill, to be mutually chosen, or their oversman, whose award shall be final; and failing such appointment within ten days after a request to do so is made in writing by one party to the other, it shall be in the power of either party to apply to the judge ordinary to appoint a skilful person to inspect and report on the premises. And both parties bind and oblige themselves to implement the premises to each other, under the penalty of three hundred pounds sterling, to be paid by the party failing to the party observing or willing to observe the same over and above performances. In witness whereof these presents, written on this and the preceding page, by W. H. of are subscribed to by us as follows: — *Videlicet*, by me, D. C., of Pall Mall, London, at , the first day of June, 1853, before these witnesses, R. F. D., merchant, &c. &c., and W. T., gentleman, , and by me, A. B., at street, London, this first day of June, 1853, before these witnesses, R. F. D. &c. &c. &c., and W. T. &c. &c. &c.

R. F. D., witness.
W. T., witness.

A. B.

R. F. D., witness.
W. T., witness.

C. D.

FISHING IN SEA-WATER LOCHS.

Sea-water lochs in Scotland, particularly those in the western part of it, abound in a great variety of excellent fish, thus offering a fine opportunity to those who are fond of indulging in the sport, should they visit or locate themselves in that wild and picturesque part of the United Kingdom. The sea-water lochs are open to every one for all sorts of fishing, either by rods, lines, or nets, with the exception of trawling or splashing for salmon and salmon trout within a mile of the shore, — the exclusive right to these fish being secured by Act of Parliament to the landed proprietors contiguous to whose shores they may be found within the above named distance; but all other fish may be taken in any way.

In some of the best lochs, turbot, soles, haddock, cod, whiting, mackerel, herring, flounders, skate, gurnet, leith, seithe, and conger eel abound. There are also certain parts of some of these lochs which abound in oysters and lobsters; and fishermen have sometimes brought me scollops and razor-fish; the latter are plentiful, but the former are not so. To enjoy this sport in perfection, a good boat, nets, and lines of all sorts are required, and the aid of a man who thoroughly understands boating and fishing; the latter will be especially necessary to ensure

safety as well as success. Those who live in the vicinity of these lochs can alone enjoy this profitable and recreative amusement to any extent, in consideration of the numerous appliances which are requisite. I will first mention the various methods of fishing, with the names of the implements used, and then give such information as I possess upon the different modes of operation.

1st. Deep sea trawl, for taking all sorts of flat fish, such as turbot, soles, flounders, &c. 2nd. Bag net, used exclusively for salmon. 3rd. Drag net, or trawl, used for taking salmon, salmon trout, and any other kind of fish. 4th. Splash net, for all sorts of fish. 5th. Long line, with 500 large hooks, for cod, haddock, skate, conger eel, &c. 6th. Long line, with 500 small hooks, for haddock, whiting, codling, flounders, and gurnet. 7th. Hand line for whiting, codling, flounders, gurnet, &c. 8th. Long leaded line for mackerel, used either sailing or rowing. 9th. Rod fishing with white fly, from the stern of the boat, for leith, seithe, and herring.

As the water is frequently very rough in sea-water lochs, and squalls come on very suddenly, a good well-built boat is essentially requisite, in order that you may carry on your operations efficiently and securely: in fine weather, during the summer months, a boat of about 12 feet keel will suffice, but in the autumn and winter months,

when the weather becomes uncertain, a much larger one will be necessary,— one from 16 to 18 feet keel, with good breadth of beam, *i. e.* $\frac{8}{18}$ of her keel; this boat will carry mainsail, foresail, and jib. If she be built of the best materials, copper-fastened, and feathered and finished in the best possible style, she will cost from 15% to 20%, exclusive of four oars, the sails, and other requisites, which will amount to about 10% more. The smaller boat would cost about seven pounds: she would require a lug sail, which she would carry well on a fine day with a moderate breeze; but the greatest caution is requisite with a boat of this size at ALL times, but more especially on a gusty day, as she is easily upset if not properly managed; and in all lochs you are constantly subject, even in the finest weather, to squalls, but more especially when the wind is at all in the east, or if there be any dark clouds flying about.

On no account put up a sail in a small boat, unless you thoroughly understand the management of sails; and, when hoisted, let the rope which holds the sail, *i. e.*, the sheet, if fastened, be secured only by a slip knot, so that you can unloose it in a moment; but it is safer to have it in hand, through a ring fixed to the gunwale of the boat for the purpose. The rope which secures the sail to the beam, *i. e.* the halliard, ought not to be tied in a knot, but merely doubled back behind

the iron pin which holds it, so that the person sitting near the mast can liberate it the instant you order him to do so, and thus let down the sail. Whenever the weather happens to be boisterous and squally it is always prudent to have one person sitting near the mast with the halliard in hand. Be sure, also, to have sufficient ballast; this is of vital importance; without it there is no security, even if there be only an ordinary breeze, the day fine, and the sun shining on you. You are always exposed in sea-water lochs, to occasional strong blasts of wind, which you cannot always perceive arriving on the surface of the water, as they sometimes come over the tops of the mountains and descend upon you without notice; hence the danger in a small boat with sails, without skilful and prudent management.

If you apprehend danger with your entire sail, take in as many reefs as you can, lowering your sail proportionably at the same time; and if the breeze be too powerful for this reduced quantity of canvas, then luff up, down with the sail, and use your oars. Never allow your boat to be dead on the water or lose her way, by luffing her too much, *i. e.* turning her head too much to the wind when a squall strikes the sail, as this is a most dangerous position to be in,—but keep the sail full, easing it a little; and when you tack, never tack down wind, or you will infallibly be capsized,

if there be anything of a breeze: this is what sailors call "jibbing" and can only be done in safety when the breeze is very slight, and then must be done cautiously, letting out the sail at the same time.

If you cannot tack cleverly, it is safer to relax your sail and use your oars, otherwise the boat may become stationary and exposed to considerable danger, in the event of a strong blast of wind arriving precisely at that moment. As I am merely a sportsman and no sailor, I must crave indulgence for any mistakes I may have made, either in the use of improper terms or otherwise, in conveying to the reader the little information I possess on this subject: it is, however, derived from practical experience, which on one or two occasions nearly proved too expensive. I therefore trust it may not be altogether without value.

ON SEA LOCHS, &c.

Since writing the preceding chapter, so many accidents have occurred within my own immediate knowledge, involving on each occasion the loss of lives, from the incautious use of the lug-

sail in small boats, that I cannot refrain from adverting to some of the circumstances connected with it, in order that those who visit the Highlands, and who may be induced to venture on the sea-water lochs in a *small* open boat, may be on their guard whenever the use of the sail is proposed, and not be deluded into a state of false security because the day is fine, and the men employed are reputed skilful,—as the accidents to which I allude have not happened to the inexperienced, but to men thoroughly conversant with the use of boats and the nature of the lochs, and well aware of the risks and dangers they might encounter, but who were either too bold, or negligent of the most ordinary precautions.

The sea-water lochs are generally surrounded by high land, mountainous and uneven, so that the wind, by being checked in some places, comes with redoubled and concentrated force in others, thereby occasioning squalls whenever there is more than an ordinary breeze; and if a squall strikes a small boat, and there be either insufficient ballast or too much sail, she will be in great danger of being upset; but, in *any case*, if either rashly or unskilfully managed—it is the affair of an instant.

Occasionally, during the summer months, there are days on which there is a fine steady breeze, exempt from squalls, on which a small boat,

with its entire sail, is perfectly safe, if properly managed; but these occasions are rare. I have generally observed, that there is either too much or too little wind, for small boats; hence the necessity of being on your guard. What I specially recommend is, attention to ballast and to the size of the sail. Never omit a proper amount of ballast; and you must be guided in this respect by the trim of your boat,—and this is relatively to her depth in the water fore and aft; and, if there be more than an ordinary breeze, take in as many reefs as you can. When a small boat is made thus snug, if she be a good, well-built one, she cannot easily be upset, provided always every vigilance and precaution be exercised. But, in taking in reefs, you must on no account omit at the same time to lower the sail; for, without doing this, your boat would derive little or no relief, the undue preponderance at the distance counteracting the good effect of the reduced quantity of canvas.

A boat, with nine workmen in it, was recently upset in crossing a loch, and five of the men drowned. This accident happened in consequence of the sail being too large and too heavy,—a squall having suddenly caught it, and capsized the boat. If this sail had been reefed in, it would not have happened, provided there had been sufficient ballast in the boat,—and *this* I very much doubt; and

in all probability the sheet was fastened, as the boat could not have been upset if any one of the nine men had had the sheet in hand and liberated the sail at the proper moment. But the man holding the helm ought to have had the sheet in hand, as he is the most competent person to know exactly the moment when this relief can be judiciously and advantageously afforded; and great skill is required in doing it, in order that it be not overdone, so as to cause the boat to lose its way.

One would have thought that men bred on the banks of a sea-water loch would have acted with more circumspection,—more especially as this identical sail had previously occasioned loss of life under precisely similar circumstances. But the most experienced and most skilful are occasionally the most bold and venturous; and only a fortnight has elapsed from the time I am now writing, since an accident occurred in this immediate vicinity, involving the loss of two lives, which corroborates this opinion.

Four men had gone on the loch to try a new fishing-boat; she was of moderate size, with a lug-sail. The parties were, as they termed it, anxious to see what she could do—how she could sail. There was more than a moderate breeze, with squalls sufficient to demand caution. The man at the helm was a fisherman, who had passed his life upon sea-

water lochs, and was as skilful in the management of an open boat with a lug-sail as any man on the coast, but had the reputation of being very daring; and here was the evil. He relied too much upon his skill and his previously frequent hairbreadth escapes, and fastened the sheet; the consequence of which was, that, on a heavy squall arriving, the boat was capsized in an instant, and went down, — which would not have been the case had the sheet been in hand, as it ought to have been, with such a boat, under such circumstances. Two men were drowned, the other two picked up by a boat which was at hand and came immediately to their aid.

On several occasions this year, when out with a small boat with a lug-sail, mackerel fishing, I should have been capsized by squalls, had I not had the sheet in hand, and been able at the moment to have eased the sail. If you are any distance from the high land, you can always perceive the squalls arriving on the surface of the water from a considerable distance, and can therefore be prepared, if you exercise proper vigilance, partially to counteract their effect, by easing the sail at the same time that you turn your helm or luff slightly to the wind.

Two other accidents happened from the same cause as before mentioned; one about six weeks since, and the other two years ago. The latter occurred to three fishermen, not far from the

shore, and in the sight of several persons,—the three men being old experienced hands. The boat was similar in make, size, and construction to an ordinary fishing boat,—open, and with a lug-sail. They were sailing fast before the wind, with a strong breeze, when they encountered a sudden squall from the opposite direction, which of course jibbed the boat; and, as the sheet was fastened, the boat, not receiving sufficient relief from the helm, went over immediately, and the three men were drowned. In this case, if the sheet had been in hand, the boat would not have been capsized.

The reason for this extreme precaution of having the sheet always in hand, is, I think, evident, from the fact that, in these sea-water lochs, squalls frequently come on in an instant, either at right angles to, or immediately opposite the direction of the wind filling your sail and which is impelling you. The immediate and inevitable consequence of this counter action is the jibbing of the boat, and its capsize,—if the sail be fast, and the boat be going before the wind.

The nature of the surrounding hills and mountains easily explains these back and counter-currents of wind, as well as their concentrated violence.

The other accident, to which I have alluded, remains unexplained, as the four persons who

were in the boat were all drowned. This boat was an open one, as large as a good sized fishing-boat, from 22 to 25 feet keel, with a mainsail, jib, and foresail. The party consisted of two gentlemen and two sailors. The former had been on an excursion of pleasure, and were returning at night across a wide sea-water loch. The weather was rather squally, but not too much so for a boat of the above size: her being capsized is therefore attributed to mismanagement; and this opinion was strongly supported by the fact, that, on recovering the boat, every halliard, sheet, and tack, was found tight and fast.

A boat recently strongly recommended to me for the purposes of all sorts of loch fishing, is one of 15 or 16 feet keel, 6 feet beam, sharp at the bow or forepart, round stemmed, and flat in the middle. A boat of this construction could not easily be upset, and would be very convenient for long-line, hand-line, mackerel, and salmon and salmon-trout fishing. There is, I believe, only one sort of boat more safe, and that is a coble; and this is made purposely for salmon and salmon-trout fishing. This boat carries a lug-sail, and, from her peculiar construction, will stand a heavy sea. She is very broad and flat at bottom, and therefore equally safe and convenient for taking in nets or long lines, and maintains

her equilibrium with one or two persons moving about in her ; and this solidity is quite requisite, as, in taking up the large long line, two persons must be at the same side of the boat at the same time, both rather leaning over,—one drawing in the line, the other gaffing the fish ; and as there is sometimes a little excitement at these moments, as well as considerable movement, a narrow-built, light boat would not only be unsuitable, but dangerous. In hauling in nets it is equally essential that the boat used for the purpose be very stable and solid,—in fact, for all sorts of fishing.

HAND-LINE FISHING.

During the summer months on a cloudy day, or early in the morning or towards the evening on any fine day, very good sport is to be had with the hand-line ; and two or three persons may partake of the same amusement at the same time, out of the same boat, each with his own hand-line. The most favourable moment is when the tide is rising, especially if it be towards sunset, or immediately after sunrise.

The hand-line is on a reel, made of any common wood, about 8 inches square, so that you may let it out or wind it up at pleasure. The length will depend upon the depth of those parts of the loch in which you are in the habit of fishing; about 60 feet will generally suffice. The best places for this sport are not in deep water, but upon sand-banks, which are to be found in all lochs; these being the spots to which almost all sorts of fish generally resort, especially such as you wish to take with the hand-line. The end of the line is fastened to the centre of a strong piece of whalebone, about 18 inches in length, the thickness of your little finger, at each extremity of which you must have a strong piece gut, from a foot to 18 inches in length, with a moderate sized hook at the end. A piece of lead must be attached exactly to the centre of the whalebone, about 3 inches under the fastening, so that when you let your line down the whalebone may descend horizontally: the lead will inform you when your hooks have reached the bottom, and will also acquaint you with the nature of the bottom on which you are fishing. You must raise your hooks gradually and frequently from the bottom to a short distance, allowing them as gradually to descend, holding the line steady, so that you may be aware the moment a fish commences to bite; the time to

hook him a little experience will soon teach you.

The best of all baits is the mussel. When that cannot be had, periwinkles boiled, as they are then drawn easily out of their shells by the end of the hook; and when put properly on, cannot be removed by the fish without his being hooked. The mussel also will require care in placing on the hook, to prevent its being taken off without your hooking your fish. If the mussel be not properly taken out of his shell this cannot be done effectively; and there is skill even in opening a mussel, — which consists in taking it out of the shell entire, so as to avoid cutting the head in half; and this can only be done by an experienced hand. The necessity for preserving the head entire is simply because it is the only part sufficiently firm to hold the hook securely.

Flounders, whiting, haddock, codlings, and even large cod are fond of the mussel. Thus your sport with the hand-line may sometimes not only be very amusing from its variety, but satisfactory from its usefulness. You should always be provided with a gaff, in case you should hook a large fish,—which will not unfrequently be the case,—as you would incur the risk of losing him, and of breaking your line by attempting to lift him out of the water, without the aid of the gaff. Frequently large skate will take the mussel, which

you could not possibly get into your boat without using a gaff; and it is hazardous to attempt to handle them. These fish frequently break the line from their great weight, adhering with all their strength in the first instance to the bottom; so much so, that you occasionally fancy that your hooks are fast upon a rock.

In pursuing this sport you must be provided with a good anchor, which you will throw out when you reach a favourite spot; and if you have a long rope, you may change your position without drawing your anchor up, by allowing your boat to drift with the tide.

When the fish do not bite freely, it is a good plan to bait the ground by throwing out mashed potatoes, either boiled or raw: this will attract a multitude of fish together; but if the tide be running strong at the time it cannot be managed, as the ground-bait will be carried away. It will be well to be provided with a pair of waterproof overalls, and a light Macintosh, as, in drawing up the line on each occasion, a quantity of water will unavoidably come over you, and soon completely saturate your dress, without this protection. The small common shellfish which may be picked up along the shore, make an excellent ground-bait when mashed up with some potatoes. Some fishermen boil their mussels before using them, as they adhere better to the hook, and are not

so easily taken off; this is not a bad plan where whittings are abundant, as the smaller ones are rather more difficult to hook than other kinds of fish. Gurnet and codlings are very voracious, bite greedily, and are easily hooked; flounders also bite freely. On a fine and favourable day two or three persons may each take several dozen of fish, especially if the whiting be in season.

ROD FISHING WITH WHITE FLY, FOR LEITH, SEITH, AND HERRING.

This sport, in my opinion, is by far the best and most amusing of all the fishing which the sea lochs afford, although it requires no skill. The best time for pursuing it is just before sunset on a fine summer's evening, till ten or eleven o'clock,—in fact, as long as the fish will rise and you can see to catch them; if there be a little wind so much the better. As this sport cannot be pursued single-handed, you must have a man to row your boat. He must row you over the favourite spots, and these you will soon discover from experience. You must have five or more

rods,—in fact, as many as you think you can manage, the greater the number of rods the greater the number of fish which will follow your boat,—long and light; the commonest will answer every purpose; the line *not quite* the length of the rod, so that on hooking your fish you can lift him at once into the boat without touching the sides. The line should be of strong horsehair, with a strong piece of gut at the end; the fly, a white one,—merely long wings made from the tail and under feathers in the white sea-gull's wing, fastened on with red silk, and with gimp, or with anything bright and showy. Five rods on a favourable evening will keep one person constantly employed. The quicker you can get your fish into the boat and unhook them, and throw your line into the water again, the better, as you will constantly have a fish on each line at the same time; therefore despatch is advantageous. You must sit near the stern of the boat, on a plank across the bows, under which you will insert the ends of the rods, some bushes having been previously fastened to the under part of the plank so as to keep the rods firmly in their place,—by which means the fish will hook themselves as your man continues gently rowing onwards. You will always be more successful when going against the tide than with it; and if the tide be rising at sunset, that will be all in favour of good sport.

At low-water your chance is not so good. The leith and seithe which you will take in this manner will be from a quarter of a pound to a pound, and sometimes heavier.

The leith are an excellent fish, something of the flavour of whiting; in fact, they are the rock whiting. The seithe are not quite so good. Both are a very handsome-looking fish. Both seithe and leith out in the open sea are sometimes taken of a very large size. The seithe, after leaving the lochs and going into the open sea, becomes a very large weighty fish, and is then called steinloch; it is in great request amongst the poorer inhabitants of the sea-coast and is taken in great abundance in the autumn, and salted for winter consumption. It is then a very dark-looking, coarse fish, anything but a delicacy, and, when salted, very inferior to cod: it is caught out in the open sea, near any small islands where there is a strong current. Very strong tackle is required to secure it: a large hook covered with cotton or wool is the bait generally used; the line is very strong and lengthy, wound round a common reel. This does not, however, always answer the purpose efficiently, as the fishermen frequently have their hands much damaged by the rapidity and violence with which the cord passes when a large fish is first hooked, as he generally goes off at a tremendous pace,—so that

a large strong multiplying reel would be the proper article for the purpose.

But, to return to the rod fishing, in addition to leith and seith. Herring, when they come into the loch, may be taken in the same manner in great abundance: I have taken 100 in one evening. Sometimes small cod and mackerel will also rise at the white fly ; but there is a better and more successful way of taking mackerel, which I will explain in another chapter. I have also occasionally caught small salmon-trout with the white fly. When the herring come in large shoals near the coast in the west part of Scotland in the month of June, they not only give wonderful sport to the amateur fisherman, but afford a large and useful supply of food to the poor inhabitants of the vicinity. On these occasions every boat is brought into service ; and it is rather an interesting sight on a fine summer's evening, just at sunset, to see from twelve to fifteen boats afloat, each containing four or five persons with eight or ten rods out at the stern, drawn up as it were in line, like so many horses ready to start for a race, on the tranquil surface of some bay contiguous to the ocean, awaiting the disappearance of the sun below the horizon and the arrival of the herrings on the surface.

When this wished-for event takes place, and it will be *immediately* after the sun has gone, if

the tide has begun to flow, it is instantly indicated by thousands of bubbles upon the glassy surface of the deep ; every boat is in motion, and all the oars in a state of activity to reach the wished-for spot. One person rows the boat, and two or three manage the rods ; and these will be kept in a continual state of activity for one or two hours, when the herrings in an instant disappear to the bottom. The boat must be rowed gently over the spot where the herrings are in motion. No number of boats appears to disturb the herrings, or prevent them taking the fly when they are in the right humour. If the night be exactly favourable, and the herrings in the best mood for taking the fly, three rods will be as much as one person can manage, as he will frequently have a fish on each line at the same time ; consequently he who can exercise more skill in expeditiously bringing his fish in, unhooking him, and throwing out his line again, will catch most fish. The line ought not to be longer than the rod, so that you can readily swing the fish into the boat without his striking the sides of it ; in which case he would fall off, as the least thing disengages a herring, his mouth being very tender.

A light Macintosh is a very desirable garment for these occasions, as, in swinging the herring in, nine out of ten come against your body ;

in fact, you ought, for the purpose of expedition, give exactly that impulse to your line that the fish may just reach you and drop between your legs ; in which case the macintosh acts as a protection from the scales of the herrings, with which you would be otherwise covered. Sometimes the herrings, although numerous, will not appear upon the surface. You must then immerse your rod perpendicularly in the water, as far as you can ; this will often succeed.

MACKEREL FISHING WITH LEADED LINE.

When mackerel are abundant, and the day suitable, they afford excellent sport with the leaded line. The day must not be too bright ; in fact, the less sun the better : and there must be a slight breeze, just sufficient to fill the sail of a small boat, so that you may pass over the places where you see the mackerel playing at a moderate pace, having your lines out at the stern of the boat. The line may be about fifty feet in length, with a yard of strong gut at the end ; the hook of moderate size ; the lead must be about three yards from the end of the line, five inches in length, of sufficient

weight just to keep the line under the water when sailing with a steady breeze.

The best bait is a small piece of the under part of the mackerel, about two inches in length, and a quarter of an inch in breadth, tapering towards one end, the hook merely run through the wider end. The end of the line may be fastened to the side of the boat, for better security; and this ought to be done in the first instance, to prevent the line from slipping through your fingers as you are letting it out; you will, of course, hold the line in your hand, occasionally drawing it gently towards you and then gradually letting it out again. You will readily perceive when you have a bite, as the mackerel are very strong for their size, and bite sharply; The resistance offered by the advancing of the boat at the same time that it hooks them adds very sensibly to their weight.

When you hook your fish, draw him in gradually not allowing the line to become slack, and then lift him gently and perpendicularly into the boat, as he is less liable to become unhooked in this position. On a good day each line may take several dozen. If there be no wind, so that the sail cannot be used, you can then have recourse to the oars; but you must not expect as good sport as with the sail; though you may take a few.

If you have no mackerel for a bait to start with, you can try a white fly, or a bit of red

cloth; with both of these I have frequently taken them. If you do not see any mackerel playing any where on the surface of the water, observe where the gulls are hovering, and try under them, as both gulls and mackerel will be in pursuit of the young herring, and consequently not far distant one from the other.

Mackerel generally come into the sea-water lochs in the West of Scotland in the month of July, and are very abundant till the middle of the month of September, when it is supposed they take their departure; but their movements are regulated by the young herrings, which they invariably follow in large shoals. When fishing for mackerel in this manner, you will frequently take gurnet and codling, especially the former, as they, like the mackerel, are also constantly in pursuit of the young herring.

I must not omit to mention that the best bait for this fishing, next to a piece of mackerel, is a piece of the belly of the gurnet; and in one respect it is the better bait, inasmuch as one piece will sometimes last for several days. It is so tough that it never tears, especially if it be kept for a day, and dried before it is used; whereas, the bait made from part of the mackerel is soon destroyed, and requires replacing by a fresh one.

The way to prepare the gurnet for a bait is to clear away all the flesh from the white skin of the belly

with a sharp knife, and then lay it on a board to dry; when it may be cut, either with a sharp knife or pair of scissors, into pieces in the shape of a small fish, about two inches in length, and a quarter in breadth. After being dried it becomes so tough, that you cannot get even the point of the hook through it without making an incision with the point of a sharp knife. I have tried white leather; which will not answer the purpose, as it soon becomes dark-coloured in the salt water; whereas the gurnet skin becomes more white by use.

When engaged in this sport, be sure to have plenty of ballast in your boat, rather too much than too little; as you are always liable to a sudden breeze in a sea-water loch, no matter how fine the day may be, and without this precaution you may be upset in a moment, with the sun shining upon you at the time.

THE DEEP-SEA TRAWL.

This net cannot be used without the aid of a large sailing-boat or yacht. When well managed, and on a good bottom, where there are plenty of flat-fish, it is most serviceable and productive. It is a long net, made in the shape of a purse, wide at one end, and becoming gradually less till it

reaches the other; it is fastened at the wide end to a strong hoop or frame of iron, rather in the shape of a semicircle. The flat part being towards the bottom, is thus dragged by a vessel in sail, to which it is fastened by strong ropes, taking turbot, soles, and all flat-fish. No net pays fishermen better than this, for the time, trouble, and expense. To those who live in the vicinity of a good sea-water loch, and who have a yacht, or can command the use of a good sailing boat of sufficient strength, no net can be more serviceable.

Before using the net, you ought to make yourself thoroughly acquainted with the nature of the loch, and ascertain where the sand banks are, and other good bottoms resorted to by flat-fish; otherwise you may not only be defeated in your operations, but seriously damage your net, should you unadvisedly trawl on a rocky, uneven bottom; and in all these sea-water lochs there is great variety, not only as to the depth of the water, but as to the nature of the bottom. Correct information on these points can generally be obtained from some fishermen residing on the coast. If this cannot be had, the sound must be resorted to; but, as a general rule, where the shore is flat the water is shallow, and where high and mountainous, deep, the depth increasing in proportion to the altitude.

A trawling net of this description is sometimes used for oysters (and this is called dredging), and occasionally with success; but not always, as this mode of taking them is attended with great risk to the net, although a dredging net is made of strong materials, oysters being rarely to be found in large quantities on any bottoms but those which are rugged, rocky, and uneven, where they adhere very firmly, and offer very considerable resistance; so that even the iron frame in these localities is not invariably a sufficient protection to the net, as the latter is frequently torn, and the former bent or broken, when brought into collision with the rugged points of rocks, although your boat may be sailing at a moderate pace.

These observations apply only to the lochs in Scotland; in many of which, particularly those in the western part of it, oysters are very abundant, and of excellent quality, the larger ones being of the best flavour; but as they are frequently to be found near the shore in shallow as well as in deep water, they are in the latter places very easily secured, especially at low tide, without the trouble of dredging; so much so, that at that time I have seen large quantities taken out merely by the hand by men, women, and children, scarcely knee-deep. From the deeper water they are raised by a small net enclosed in an iron frame fixed to the end of a long, light pole; so

light, that one man can easily manage it from a boat, an anchor being thrown out to keep it steady.

The iron which encloses the net is made semi-circular, with one side flat; so as to enable the fishermen to detach oysters from the rocks as well as to raise them from sandy bottoms; on which places I have also seen them in tolerable quantities: but the majority are generally to be found on rocks; and some so tightly adhesive, that you cannot possibly detach them, except they are in such shallow water as will enable you to come into close quarters with them.

For this sort of fishing it is necessary that the day be fine and clear, and perfectly calm; if there be the slightest ripple on the surface, or clouds moving about, it will be impossible to operate successfully. Oysters have so slight a power of locomotion, that a bed may be easily made by laying them down on any suitable sea-coast which can be protected. Their movement is confined exclusively to the impulse, or jerk, which they give themselves by the opening and shutting of their shells, so that there can be no apprehension of losing them if they remain unmolested.

On rocky ground covered with sea-weed, I have frequently found them in considerable numbers; and if it happens that any rivulet, or stream

of fresh water, empties itself immediately where there is a bed of oysters, the flavour of the latter is considered to be greatly improved by this circumstance. They cast their spawn in May. This appears like drops of wax or grease, adhering to any rock, stone, or hard substance on which it may fall. Shells supervene in a few days; but the oyster is of slow growth, not reaching maturity under three years.

The large rock oyster is undeniably, for curries, stewing, and for *vol-au-vents*, better than the lobster; inasmuch as it is quite as delicious, and much more wholesome.

Oysters are out of season during the summer months, *i. e.*, from the end of April till August or September; being thin, and of bad flavour. Oysters invariably rest and adhere to the bottom on which they are found by the convex shell, the flat one being uppermost; by which means the liquid which they imbibe is retained in the cup of the lower shell. In the Milton and Colchester oysters the cup of the lower shell is very small, but in the rock oysters it is deep and capacious.

The oyster, I believe, never quits, changes, or renews its domicile of shell; but the lobster is said to cast its external covering every year, the new tenement in its growth gradually forcing off the old one; but the animal being in a defenceless condition for a few days, is said by fisher-

men to conceal himself till the new shell, which is soft and tender in the first instance, becomes firm, hard, and capable of resistance; he then sallies forth fearlessly to gratify his voracity by seizing all the prey that may come within his reach. The discarded shell is comparatively so small, when contrasted with the newly equipped animal, that it seems quite wonderful how the former could have ever contained the latter; but in lobsters of only one year old it is presumed that the growth is rapid immediately on the old shell being discarded, and continues so long as the new exterior remains tender, which is thought to be about from two to three days; and this may explain the sudden difference of size. As lobsters are very pugnacious, they frequently have their claws broken off in their conflicts; but, singular to state, nature very soon repairs this damage, as a new claw grows from the old joint, but never, although perfect in other respects, attains the length or size of the old one. The precise place of the fracture is very discernible.

SEITH AND LEITH FISHING,
WITH ROD AND LINE, WITH WHITE FLY, BY NIGHT,
IN THE SOUND OF JURA.

At the northern end of the Sound of Jura, which is about eight or nine miles in breadth and twelve in length, there is a small rocky island, lying north and south, nearly midway between Jura and the south-eastern part of North Knapdale, and about five miles from Crinan, in the immediate vicinity of which there is excellent rod fishing, for seith and leith, during the months of May, June, and July, whenever the weather may be favourable. May and June are, however, the best months, as the seith and leith occasionally, during the month of July, desert their usual places of resort in quest of the young herring. This sport commences about ten minutes after sunset; and if the moon be at the full, or thereabouts, and the night fine and calm, may be carried on till eleven o'clock, and sometimes as late as even twelve; and be recommenced at about two o'clock in the morning, and continued till about half an hour before sunrise, when the innumerable multitudes of fishes which have enlivened the surface of the water simultaneously disappear, and the sport ends.

The island in question is almost a barren rock,

rising in the centre some twenty feet above the surface of the water. The sides, in many parts, slope down to the water's edge; thus affording an easy access to small boats, especially as the sea is perfectly calm at the sides, the current being diverted by the opposing ends of the island, as the tide flows north and south, flowing to the north, and ebbing southwards. The upper part of the rock is rough, rugged, and uneven, with a few straggling tufts of grass here and there, intersected by hollow spaces holding water. This spot is the resort of innumerable sea swallows and sea gulls. The former, which are not visible during the winter months, make their appearance in this vicinity on the 15th of May; and as they commence breeding in June, and select islands of this description for the purpose, their eggs may be found in great abundance, two or three together, in any small cavity on the surface of the rock, without scarcely any semblance of a nest. The eggs are about the size of the golden plover's egg, and somewhat similar in appearance, although not so uniform and regular in size and colour. When boiled hard, they are almost, if not quite, as good to eat. I have sometimes found on two small islands as many as 200 in one day, and as many more after an interval of four or five days.

The island of which I have commenced the de-

scription as the scene of piscatorial operations is about 150 yards in length, and from 25 to 30 in breadth. From its tortuous and irregular construction, it forms several small nooks or bays at the sides, excellent for boat fishing with rods, in addition to the tranquil spots between the currents at each end of the island. As in the immediate current, at the moment of either the tide's flux or reflux, two men can scarcely row against the stream, and at the very highest tide I question whether even four men could do so, it is essentially necessary, even in the very finest weather, to have two skilful and powerful rowers to keep your boat whilst you are fishing within the intermediate spaces, in the centre of which there is scarcely any current; but which commences, and gradually increases, as you approach the sides. And as these spots, from the narrowness of the island, are necessarily small, both skill and strength are requisite to keep your boat within the prescribed limits; but in proportion as the tide rises or falls, the current becomes less violent, and about half-tide is the most favourable time for sport.

At each end of the island, opposite those parts which stem the tide and occasion its precipitate divergence on each side, are the most favourite spots. These, from the narrowness of the island, are small; but, when fish are abundant, they

afford sufficient space for the successful operation of three or four boats, as the fish, when well disposed to take the fly, do not appear to be in the slightest degree alarmed at any number of boats, but continue playing on the surface close to the boats on all sides, in the midst of all the hostile movements against them.

At half a mile distance from this island there is another equally favourite spot, of a couple of acres in extent, more or less, where there is a perfect calm between two powerful currents, the cause, which is not immediately perceptible, being a reef of rocks, concealed beneath the surface, and only discernible at low tide. It is rather a singular sight to witness a dead calm out in the open sea, with a violent tide on either side carrying everything before it; and when one approaches this tranquil, mirror-like, glassy surface, for the first time, ascending through the opposing current, it is not without a secret and uncontrollable emotion of dread, so treacherous and unnatural is its appearance. The violence and the strength of the tide in the Sound of Jura is readily explained by the narrowness of the channel, and the fact of its waters being influenced by the weight and pressure of the vast Atlantic Ocean. In like manner, in the German and the English Ocean the tide is found to be strongest in those places which are narrowest; a

large body of water, in each case, being driven through a small passage. Another effect of this relative disposition of circumstances, is the tides rising to a very great height.

Having given this slight sketch of the scene of piscatorial operations, I will endeavour to explain the manner in which they are successfully carried into effect. The mode of proceeding is not dissimilar from that adopted near the coast for taking small seith, leith, and herring. The principle is precisely the same; but as the fish at a distance from the shore are much larger and more powerful, stronger tackle is required; the rods and lines must be stouter, the hooks larger and stronger, and the white feather, of which the fly is formed, must be longer. The fish taken in the vicinity of this island average from one to three pounds. Sometimes fish as large as four or five pounds are caught; and when larger ones take the flies, the tackle is broken; but at this season of the year the young fish of the previous year are chiefly those which congregate together in these localities, and are taken.

When the autumn arrives, these fish become heavy and powerful, and a different style of fishing is adopted, and different tackle brought into requisition to secure them. They are then known as steinloch; but I have explained, in a former chapter, the method of taking these.

Those from one to three pounds give capital sport, being remarkably strong for their size, and vigorous in their resistance. Three persons in each boat will suffice, one to manage the rods, and one at each oar. Six rods may be used effectively. They ought to be from 12 to 15 feet in length, three-fourths alder, and one-fourth, *i.e.* the top, of hazel, which must be firmly spliced on. By this combination you have a light, manageable rod, with strength and flexibility where they are each required. The line must be of the same length as the rod; on no account longer, as your continuous sport depends much upon your expeditiously lifting your fish into the boat with the strength of the rod and line with the first impulse, without the fish being allowed to strike the side of the boat; which would be the case with too long a line, involving a loss of one-third of the fish hooked, and interfering with your prompt attention to your other lines, on each of which there may be fish, as it is no uncommon occurrence to have a fish on each line at the same moment. Dispatch, therefore, is essential to success, and he is the most skilful and efficient fisherman who can bring his fish most readily into the boat, unhook them, and replace his rod and line, and accomplish this without interfering with the other rods and lines lying closely in juxtaposition: and as the fish follow the boat, attracted by the flies,

the more quickly you can get your lines into the water again, after having secured your fish, the less liable will you be to lose the shoal which is following you, as, strange to state, the hooked fish which are plunging about in the water do not in the slightest degree alarm those which are following your flies.

Your line must be made of strong horsehair ; the more joints and fastenings in it the better, as these, in meeting the current, make seams and marks in the water, which attract the attention of the fish to your flies. At the end of your line one piece of gut, to which your fly will be attached, will suffice ; and this must be of the best quality, as it must be recollected that this is intended to bear a fish of three pounds weight, there being no time for the use of gaffs or landing-nets. The hook must be the size of a salmon-hook ; but a white tin one, black hooks not answering so well. The fly is formed of one feather, of about three inches in length, fastened firmly on the upper side of the shank of the hook ; not all along it, but only at the extreme end, so that almost the entire length of the feather is at liberty, keeping parallel with the hook as the boat advances through the water. The feather must be a perfectly white one, taken either from under the wing of a large white sea-gull, or from out of one of the tail feathers ; if from under the

wing, three inches of the fine end of the feather; if from a large tail-feather, it will be a part selected from the side, of the same length. This feather is supposed to imitate a small young fish.

The person who manages the rods will sit on a plank across the bows of the boat, as near the stern as he conveniently can, with the ends of the rods inserted into a small faggot tightly fastened underneath the plank on which he is sitting, so that he will have all the rods within his immediate control; the gentle and regular progress of the boat keeping the lines at full stretch, so that the fish on taking the flies hook themselves. When the fish take very freely, two persons will do more execution with the rods than one.

The amateurs of this exciting sport in fine weather generally assemble on the island an hour before sunset, draw their boats up on the rock, prepare their flies, chat, and smoke their pipes till the wished-for moment arrives, when there is a simultaneous movement towards the boats, and in a few minutes they are all afloat. This moment, most exciting to those who are fond of the sport, must be witnessed and participated in to be appreciated. At the time of the sun's disappearance below the top of one of Jura's mountains to the west, the smooth and glassy intervals between the currents present an

unbroken, speckless, mirror-like surface, when, after an interval of about ten minutes, the golden track of the sun's descent being no longer visible, in an instant, as if by magic, a thousand bubbles and small circles are perceptible, indicating the arrival of a host of fish at the surface; and to these spots all the boats speed their way, rowing backwards and forwards through them at a gentle pace: and if the fish be in good humour for taking the fly, which is generally the case if the evening, or rather night, be fine, each person who has the management of the rods will have continuous occupation, excitement, and sport till half-past ten, eleven, or even sometimes as late as twelve o'clock; following the fish from one favourite spot to another, as every now and then they disappear from one place and exhibit themselves in another; so that the rowers have as much excitement in the pursuit as the man at the rods in the taking of the fish. At eleven or twelve, when the first act is over, the boats retire to the island, and await the morning's fishing; which is as good as the evening's, only not so durable, as it commences at two and finishes about four; *i. e.*, half an hour before sunrise. When the fish takes freely, I do not know any kind of fishing more exciting than this nocturnal rod-fishing; as it will constantly happen that you will have a fish on each rod at the same time,,

pulling with all his might, and bending the point of your rod below the surface of the water, and sometimes it happens that one escapes with a rod and line, and then you are obliged immediately to pursue your rod if you do not wish to lose it. If it gets into the current it is no easy matter to overtake and recapture it: but this rarely occurs, as the fish when hooked generally take a perpendicular direction, and not a horizontal one. However, whenever the "contre-temps" *does* arrive, it creates confusion and spoils sport.

One boat will sometimes take as many as 200 fish in one night; generally from about half that quantity to 150. The farmers and poor people who pursue this mode of fishing, salt their fish and keep them for their winter's use. The seith are by no means a first-rate fish. The small ones are, however, very good; the larger ones only fit to be salted; and the leith, both great and small, are a first-rate fish, quite equal to the whiting. I have taken them frequently of a pound-and-a-half weight; but very much larger ones are sometimes caught.

To pursue this rod fishing comfortably, a pair of waterproof overalls and a light macintosh are essentially requisite, as in swinging the fish into the boat five out of six will strike against your body; and if you fish with one rod under the

water, which is a mode frequently and successfully resorted to when the fish do not take freely on the surface, keeping the point of your rod down in a perpendicular direction as low as you can, in raising your rod to bring in your fish you will receive a large supply of water down the handle of the rod; against which inconvenience you can only be protected by your waterproof sleeves and overalls: and towards the morning, in the very finest weather, you will be readily accessible to cold, and to the extreme discomfort of having your clothes saturated with sea water, which would inevitably be the case without this waterproof protection. Independently of the wet, you will not find a little extra clothing through the night an incumbrance. Woollen gloves I have also found to be a great comfort in this sort of fishing.

In addition to this island at the northern end of the sound, to which I have just alluded, there are numerous others equally worthy of the sportsman's notice, which I have visited at different seasons of the year, either for fishing, shooting, or in quest of sea-swallows' eggs. Some in groups of three or four together, some singly; some near the shore, others at a distance from it; some large, some small; some with excellent pasture for sheep and black cattle, others with heather and coarse grass; and some few smaller ones

almost exclusively of rock. In the immediate vicinity of all these there is good rod fishing at particular seasons of the year; the largest fish being generally taken near those which are most distant from the shore. Where the islands are parallel to one another the fishing is generally very good, the currents being strong in the channel between them and at the extreme ends. About those which are isolated the currents are not so strong and the fishing not so good, with the exception of such as are at a distance from the shore, where the tide is always powerful and the fishing excellent.

Some of these distant islands are large, and good for wild-fowl shooting, affording the sportsman, from their peculiar construction, great facilities of access to the fowl, which assemble during the winter months in very great abundance; invited and attracted by the numerous nooks and corners which are sheltered from the wind and undisturbed by the current. On two or three, where the pasture is good, I have constantly found and shot wild geese, and frequently snipes, and occasionally golden plover. These islands are at a short distance beyond the southern end of the sound, and about one mile and a half from the shore, and are, perhaps, the very best of all the islands for fishing; herring, as well as large seith and leith, being constantly taken in

great abundance. All three fish take the same description of fly, the herring only requiring a smaller hook; this being the only change necessary when they make their appearance.

Sometimes one person will take as many as 200 in one evening; and this is considered very successful sport with rods, although many thousands may be taken with nets; in which case the produce is estimated by barrels. The net fishermen are generally the regular professional fishermen, whereas the rod fishermen are composed of amateurs, farmers, and peasants living on the coast; but even with the rod and line many of the latter contrive to take, during the summer and autumn, sufficient fish to salt and dry for their winter's supply. In the winter many of the peasants bring the long line and hand line into beneficial requisition; the method of using which I have already fully explained.

About the end of June and beginning of July the herrings arrive from the south in very large shoals, and after remaining a few weeks, move northwards. During the time they are in the sound and in the neighbouring lochs, rod fishing is uncertain, as seith and leith, as well as fish of every description, leave their usual places of resort in pursuit of the herring's fry, which may be frequently seen in myriads; and as these are constantly in motion, being urged by their

numerous voracious pursuers, they are rarely to be found long together in the same place; but as they have enemies in the air as well as in the water, in the shape of sea gulls, equally assiduous in pursuit, fishermen are generally informed to what spot they can successfully direct their operations.

As a general rule, whenever there are any herrings in any loch, sound, or by the coast, every other kind of fish is plentiful; and when they disappear, fish are scarce for a season. The herrings in the Sound of Jura, and in the contiguous lochs, are small and very inferior to those taken in Loch Fine, which are perhaps the largest and best-conditioned caught anywhere. They are taken by thousands and dispatched in boxes by the steamers to Glasgow, Liverpool, and elsewhere, a small quantity of salt being sprinkled between each layer.

THE SPLASH NET.

This net affords excellent sport; it is not so effective as a drag net, but is more manageable, demands less trouble, and requires fewer hands:

All sorts of fish may be taken in it. At night it may be used for salmon and salmon-trout, and in the day time for mackerel and for any other fish which may be in season. To take salmon and salmon-trout with it at night, you must approach those parts of the shore either in the sea-water lochs, or on the sea coast, where any burn or rivulet empties itself, and must exercise the same caution as with the drag net, by commencing your operations as silently as possible. The net must be properly arranged at the stern of the boat, across a plank made specially for the purpose, with the corners rounded, so that there may be no impediment to the letting your net out with speed and facility. One person can perform this operation.

In the *first* instance the net will require wetting, as it will not go out well when perfectly dry. A stone, of sufficient weight to keep the net fast and steady when in the water, must be fastened to the lead line at each end: the first stone must be dropped close to the shore. Take care always to have your lead line on the side you are enclosing. After the first stone is dropped, the person rowing the boat will proceed as quietly as possible, and as quickly as the lowering of the net will admit of, to the point which you intend making; when this is reached, the other stone may be thrown out as near the shore as possible.

If the lead line goes down well, the cork line will generally take care of itself. Having enclosed the space you wished, you will commence rowing backwards and forwards, and making as much disturbance as possible in the water, in order to drive the fish into the net; as those fish which do not strike in the first instance will do all in their power to avoid getting into the net, either by leaping over the top or by passing by the sides, if there be the smallest possible intervening space: but the largest and best fish generally go into the net at once, and, when once in, are safe enough, provided the net be taken up properly; and this can only be done by two persons, especially when it is intended to reset the net, one taking in the lead line, the other the cork one. This must be done simultaneously, the lead line being kept a little higher than the cork one; by which means a bag is formed, preventing even the smallest fish from escaping, as in addition to salmon and salmon-trout, very fine flounders and codlings are frequently caught.

When it is intended to continue splashing during the night, the net must be taken in carefully on each occasion, the lead line being folded backwards and forwards on one side of the board, the cork line, in a similar manner, on the other side. When this is well done, the net will, on the following occasion, go out of itself as the

boat advances, with merely a slight pressure of the hand to keep it in its place.

To use the *splash* advantageously at night, the tide and weather must both be in your favour; and you must previously, in the day time, have made yourself thoroughly acquainted with the nature of the shore where you intend to operate, otherwise you may be disappointed, and expend your labour in vain. The night must be perfectly calm and still, and, in the next place, it must be low water; and if it happens that the moon is in that quarter in which there is little tide, so much the better, you will have a longer time for your sport and a better chance. Immediately after sunset, salmon and salmon-trout approach close to the edge of the shore, in those places where the fresh water descends, especially if the tide be ebbing; so that you may then commence your operations if favoured in this respect. The larger space you can enclose with your net the better; but you must take great care not to get your net into too deep water, bearing in mind exactly how far you may venture from the shore, guided by your previous examination of the coast; as sometimes the bottom shelves off suddenly, so that if the net were dropped into too deep water, the lead would not reach the bottom, and the fish would escape under it.

In those places where you cannot have the

advantage of any side of the shore to drop the end of your net upon, but are obliged to fish parallel to it, it is a good plan to drop the net in at one end in a semicircular form, and to splash from the other end, at right angles to your net, backwards and forwards. The net, in the first instance, must be dropped in as silently and expeditiously as possible, and the splashing commenced instantly you reach the end of your net, and carried on vigorously. I have frequently seen this plan adopted with great success.

In those lochs where the water is deep, and where the construction of the shore is such as to admit of no facilities of using this net in any of the ways above described, then a very much larger, longer, and deeper net is required to give you anything like a chance ; and many circumstances must conspire to ensure success, especially if the neighbourhood be such as will not admit of your leaving your net out through the night with safety. The tide must be low, the night not too bright, and, if there be a slight breeze, so much the better, the net can then be placed in those parts of the loch where you know salmon and salmon-trout are in the habit of passing to the fresh water ; one end of the net as near the shore as possible ; a small anchor at each end to keep the net tight, otherwise the fish will not mesh. Having placed your net, you must remain

at one end of it in your boat ; and can examine it at the end of one or two hours, or whenever you hear fish strike. On some nights, when the fish are on the move, many may be taken in this manner ; but success is uncertain, and waiting rather irksome : but in a loch of this description you have no alternative.

When mackerel are in the loch, this net may be left in all night, and visited the first thing in the morning. If a shoal happens to pass, a large quantity may be taken. From one to three hundred I have known caught and taken in one night ; at all events, if in the height of the season, a score or two may be constantly secured in this manner almost every night. The net must be placed at right angles to the shore, but where there is little or no current. A small anchor, or stone, must be attached to each end, so as to keep the net tight ; the end which is near the shore must be as close in as possible, so as to admit of no intervening space, as all fish pass near the shore ; and this you will soon discover if your net be well set, by finding the bulk of the fish taken at this end. If you have seen mackerel playing during the day near the shore, you cannot do better than to place your net there just before sunset. The net may sometimes be left for days very advantageously in the same place, and visited at intervals ; but it ought to

be taken out every third day, and be thoroughly dried, and remain out at least for twenty-four hours, as if constantly allowed to remain in the water it would soon become rotten and useless. At the end of every season it ought to be well soaked in bark and cateehu, and when thoroughly dried, hung up in a perfectly dry place; by this means, and with proper care, a good net will last for two or three seasons. A good net of this description will cost about 3*l*. When this net is not in use, it ought occasionally to have the benefit of the air on a fine dry day, this being essential to its preservation; and when hung up within it ought to be out of the reach of rats and mice, as they would seriously damage it if they could get access to it; and a precaution of this nature is always necessary, as rats always abound by the sea shore, where houses and farm-buildings are contiguous.

THE BAG NET.

This net is used exclusively for salmon, and where they abound is most profitable. It is fastened to stakes by the sea coast, or by the sides of sea-water lochs where salmon are known

to pass. It is wide at one end, and at the other there is a bag or purse; it is so constructed, that salmon on having once entered it cannot return. From the bank, at right angles, there is a connecting net, called a leader, which obstructs the passage of the salmon on both sides; and, as they naturally follow this, on their passage being impeded, get into the first department of the bag net, and from thence through others into the purse or bag, which is kept down by an anchor, and its precise position indicated by a buoy, to which it is attached by a rope.

When the fish are taken out, the purse is merely raised into a boat and the end untied, and the fish thus liberated and secured; without in any way disturbing the position of the net, or displacing the stakes, as the latter being firmly driven into the bottom, remain permanently fixed as long as they are sound. A man must be in constant attendance on this net. It ought to be taken out every third or fourth day, and hung up to dry; being in the meantime replaced by another, two being properly required for each position, for their mutual preservation. One net kept continuously in the water would soon become rotten and unfit for use. Sometimes only one net is used, taken out on Saturday and replaced on Monday. But this is a bad plan.

At the end of the season these nets will require soaking in bark and catechu; and then must be tho-

roughly dried in the open air before they are put away in some dry place for next season; *but* even when not in use they must occasionally be taken out on a fine day and have the benefit of the fresh air. It frequently happens at certain periods that large quantities of sea weed are carried up and down by the tide, and fill the meshes of the net; in which case the net must be immediately taken up, and a clean one substituted, as no fish will come near the net when it is foul. When these occasions arise, there is much trouble and but little profit, as the cleansing of one of these large nets thus foul requires much time, trouble, and perseverance, the weed or reek being very adhesive. Each position for a stake net produces a good rent to the proprietor of the land contiguous to the shore, varying according to the reputation of the locality. These nets are very destructive of the sport of the rod in the contiguous rivers, and are very justly complained of by the amateur fisherman.

FRESH-WATER LOCHS IN SCOTLAND.

The small fresh-water lochs in Scotland abound in trout, and afford excellent sport to those who

are fond of fly-fishing, and who prefer numbers to size; as the trout in these are generally very numerous, but small, so that many dozen may be taken on any favourable day. The lochs being supplied by numerous springs, and the bottoms either rocky or gravelly, and free from mud, the trout are excellent; they, however, differ both in quality and size in different lochs. I have observed that one particular quality and size predominates in each loch. In some you will never take a fish beyond an eighth of a pound; in others they will not exceed a quarter of a pound; in some you will find them about the size of a herring, *i.e.* half a pound: but where these sizes exist they are always very abundant, so that you may take a large number; in fact, get a rise at almost every throw of your fly. In some the flesh and flavour approaches the redness and taste of salmon; in others the flesh is white, and the flavour that of the ordinary trout, but perfectly sweet.

In some of the largest and deepest lochs, trout of three, four, and five pounds may be taken; but these large fish are neither so abundant, nor are they so easily taken; in fact, they are rather difficult to take, except with a particular fly, or by trolling. The fish are of excellent quality, although their exterior is very dark. The lochs containing these superior fish are so very rare on

some moors, that perhaps out of a dozen, eleven will contain only small fish. The lochs on the top of the hills seldom contain large fish, the heavy fish being generally found in the lochs in the low ground; these being more extensive and deeper, and being supplied by many small tributary streams, in addition to their own springs, have a larger and better supply of food. For small trout no flies succeed so well as the red hackle, the gnat, and the dun fly, and, towards evening, a small white fly.

If you are not contented with the productiveness of the rod, you may try a more wholesale implement, called an OTTER. This is made of wood or cork; the latter material, however, being decidedly the better of the two for the purpose. Its length may be from one to two feet, and half that measure in depth, breadth one inch; the shape that of a boat; a piece of lead screwed into and along the bottom, so that it may move perpendicularly. On one side you must have a small strong wire rail, about four inches in length, projecting about one inch. On this there must be a small ring, to which you will attach your line; by which means you can draw the otter to either the right or left. The end of your line ought to consist of three or four yards of strong gut. To this you may attach your flies, at intervals of from two to three feet; a dozen or

more flies, as you may think proper. Your gut end must be attached to a good line, which you will manage with a strong rod and multiplying reel. To work the otter effectively, there must be a slight breeze; the moment it is afloat, it will move off spontaneously, and will then require your direction with the rod and line, which you must give it by walking slowly, and managing the reel; so that you may fish either at a distance in the middle of the loch, or by the sides, as you judge best. You will readily perceive the fish rising and hooking themselves, and bring your otter in whenever your line is sufficiently loaded, and you are in a good position for the purpose.

Experience will soon teach you the most effective manner of using this wholesale implement.

On some waters the use of it might be considered unfair and poaching; but on these Highland lochs a benefit is conferred by the removal of these small trout, as their very superabundance is the occasion of their being so diminutive. It is useless attempting to fish with the otter on a bright, sunny day, except there be a strong breeze; and then it may succeed when a rod would fail: but a warm, mild, cloudy day, with a slight breeze from the south-west, is most favourable. The north and east wind are altogether adverse to success.

The foregoing observations relate merely to the small mountain lochs, and have no reference to

those larger lochs, or rather inland lakes, with which Perthshire especially abounds. In these the trout are of great size; but are not so often caught with the fly as with the minnow, trolling, or rather, in piscatorial language, spinning, or with a night line, baited either with a small fish or young frog. With the latter I have known very large fish taken. The large trout are frequently nearly as good as salmon; and that is not a matter of surprise, as these large lochs are constantly supplied and refreshed by large streams which flow into and through them.

The chief lochs of Perthshire are Loch Katrine, Loch Achray, Loch Ard, Loch Voil, Lubnaig, Dochart, and Earn, in the south-west quarter; Loch Tay, in the centre of the western district; Loch Rannock, Erigh, and Lydoch in the north-western district. There are also some smaller ones. Many of these lochs are accessible to and frequented by salmon; as these fish ascend any river instinctively, as far as they can do so, and it is no slight obstacle which impedes their progress. The waterfalls and acclivities which they leap up, or throw themselves up, must be witnessed to be credited.

The chief rivers in Perthshire are the Tay, the Carn, the Dochart, the Almond, the Garry, the Tummel, the Bruar, the Erigh, the Ardlie, the She, and the Isla. Almost all these afford ex-

cellent sport to those who are fond of first-rate trout and salmon fishing with the rod ; and perhaps there is no amusement more attractive, exciting, and fascinating to the genuine sportsman than the latter ; at least, if we may be allowed to judge from the numerous admissions made in its favour by those who have luxuriated in all the pleasurable and recreative excitements which wood, hill, field, plain, and mountain afford, either with the gun or in the chase. To throw your fly over a good pool of water softly agitated by a western breeze, and undulated by a good progressive bubbling current, slightly tinged by a recent shower, the former co-operating with the latter to produce precisely that ripple which you require, with the prepossession that there are heavy salmon, causes as much pleasure and interest to the fisherman, as he cautiously approaches to make his first cast with his fly, as the drawing of a first-rate cover with a pack of fox-hounds to the fox-hunter, with the certainty of a find. And when a good fish is hooked, the excitement is perhaps not less than that produced on the finding of your fox ; neither is it less durable, although more continuous, if I may be allowed to use the expression, as you have no checks with your salmon ; your skill, vigilance, assiduity, and anxiety being of necessity unremittingly on the stretch until you safely land your fish, be-

cause, like the fox, the salmon may elude and disappoint all your efforts in the expected moment of victory ; both accidents do happen sometimes, greatly to the annoyance of both the fisherman and fox-hunter. The accomplishment of each victory frequently requires about the same time. Forty-five minutes to an hour over a first-rate country at a first-rate pace is considered a first-rate run, when you run into and kill your fox in good style ; and a heavy salmon will sometimes require the continuous exertions of the most expert and skilful fisherman for the same amount of time before he can safely land him. A fish of 9 or 10 lbs. may be killed in a quarter of an hour, and you may sometimes run into your fox in the same time, and the shine be considerably taken out of the best of horses, as the agitated state of their tails often testifies ; these short and decisive runs being generally most severe.

It is vexatious to lose either your fox or salmon just as you are expecting to kill either the one or the other : but both will sometimes escape ; the salmon just when you are about to land him and he appears quite exhausted, will make one convulsive leap out of the water, and as he falls you have the mortification of finding your line slack, and perceive your fish moving off. In the same manner with your fox, after a burst of three-quarters of an hour, your hounds will throw

up in an instant, on the high road or at the entrance to a village, baffling all the efforts of the most skilful huntsman to get upon his line again or discover the place of his refuge. Sometimes a flock of sheep may be the innocent cause of his escape; sometimes a drain or hollow tree may conceal him. This is not often the case; but it does occasionally occur, sly reynard having been seen by some countrymen emerging from his hiding place and making good his retreat after the field had taken their departure. In such an emergency, if the day be not too far advanced and a likely cover be within reach, a fresh fox may be drawn for and found, and a good run had, terminating auspiciously, thus obliterating the former disappointment. And in like manner the fisherman may try a fresh pool, and hook and kill a fine salmon, and after this one several others; so that he has more sport, as far as it goes, than the fox-hunter, and a remedy for any disappointment more readily at hand. Still I do not think the fisherman gets over the loss of a good fish so easily as the fox-hunter reconciles himself to the loss of his fox; as the latter has had what he principally desired, in having had a first-rate run; and if reynard has escaped, he enjoys the anticipation of killing him on the next occasion, after having had another good day's sport with him. But even in this he may be deceived, as I have

known one particular fox defeat a first-rate pack during the whole of one season, unless he was killed quite at the end of it on a foggy day, when he was found in his usual cover, and the hounds left the whole field in the lurch, the pace having been so great that no horse could live with them, and the fog prevented their direction being pursued. As the fox was never found subsequently, it was presumed that he was killed on that occasion.

It may be asked how a particular fox could be identified. In this instance it was easily done, as this fellow had lost the greater part of his brush. Those who are passionately fond of fox-hunting, and have never enjoyed the sport of salmon fishing, will, in all probability, consider it absurd to institute any comparison between the two sports. I recommend them to suspend their judgment for a few years, and then try what appears the less exciting and more tranquil amusement, and I do not think they will withhold from salmon fishing its claim and pretension to that fascination with which it is credited by its numerous admirers. Perhaps at that delightful period of the existence of a man of fortune so felicitously described by Dr. Johnson, "when youth rushes forth to take possession of the world," and everything is or appears to be "couleur de rose," then, perhaps, fox hunting will most de-

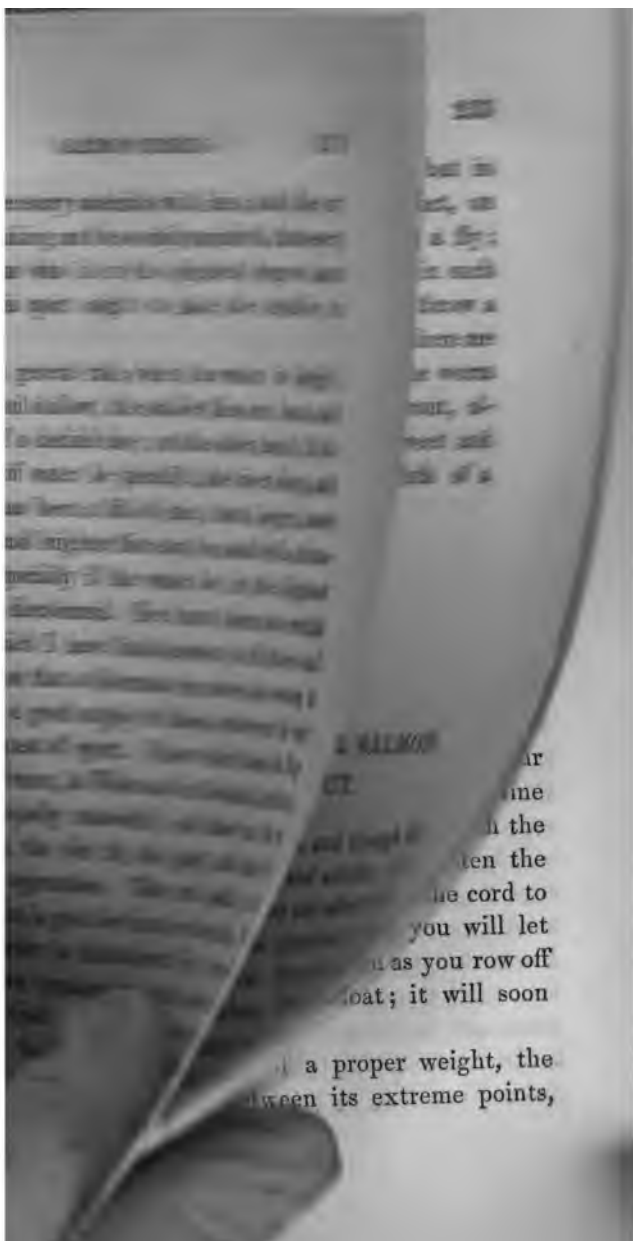
cidedly bear the palm; but when the fever of this first excitement be over, the best countries have been ridden across, upon the best of horses, first-rate sport enjoyed, and perhaps a dislocation occurred, and a bone or two broken, and some dozen years elapsed, then salmon fishing, if it can be enjoyed on a first-rate river, with all necessary appliances and requirements, will come in for its due meed of praise and just appreciation.

I will not pretend to give any instructions as to the best mode of throwing a fly, hooking and killing a salmon, as I am of opinion that these accomplishments must be derived from practical experience, and cannot be imparted verbally.

Every man, before he attempts salmon fishing, ought to try his hand at trout fishing; and when he has learned the best method of killing large trout well, he may then test his skill and experience with salmon. There is, of course, considerable skill in throwing your fly well and judiciously: but if you have first-rate tackle, this art is easily acquired; the great trial comes when you have hooked a good fish; then a good hand and eye, the utmost vigilance, and some patience are demanded to make up the amount of skill required. You must watch every movement of the fish, so as to be ready to relax the line instantaneously when he leaps out of the water, otherwise you may lose him. The principal tact

consists in judiciously relaxing and contracting the line, and maintaining your rod in a proper position; by which operations you fatigue and ultimately kill your fish before you can venture to draw him up to a suitable part of the shore to be gaffed and landed by your attendant. This is sometimes a dangerous moment, as salmon will frequently, when apparently quite beaten, make a violent and sudden effort, by leaping out of the water; so that your vigilance must not be suspended till you see the gaff in his gills.

Good fishing tackle can be purchased in all the large towns in Scotland, although London has the highest reputation for rods and Dublin for flies. Correct information as to the most suitable flies can often be obtained from the nearest vender of tackle to the river you are going to fish, as flies which would be very successful in one would be useless in another. This is a fact cannot be readily explained as to salmon, being chiefly fanciful; whereas, in trout you require a close resemblance to those which frequent the water, otherwise you will be unsuccessful except in particular cases. trout will take any fly which resembles the natural food of the fish.



of a proper weight, the
between its extreme points,

the denomination of red palmer; but whatever be its name, it is a most killing fly.

Burn fishing is more interesting and amusing than loch fishing; and there is more variety attending its pursuit, in the agreeable and striking change of scenery which is presented to your view, as you ascend or descend the contiguous rocky acclivities, covered with blooming heather and various foliage, or follow its serpentine and circuitous course through some beautiful valley or dell, cautiously approaching each untried pool, and throwing your fly, unseen, with all the skill in your power. If the day be suitable, and the trout in humour, your fly will be frequently taken as it drops, before you have time to draw it an inch across the bubbling stream; but you must take care not only not to be seen, but not even to allow your shadow to fall on the water. This cannot always be done without management; but as success depends upon the observance of this rule, the fisherman must exercise all his ingenuity.

The advantage of the burn over the loch consists in its affording good sport on many a day on which the loch would be impracticable, as there must be a slight breeze for loch fishing; whereas in the burn the breeze is not so essential, if you are favoured in every other respect.

I have never tried a worm in the lochs, but in burns it may be successfully used ; in fact, on certain days, is much more killing than a fly ; and there are numerous pools, which are in such difficult positions, that it is impossible to throw a fly cleverly across them ; and as in these there are frequently the greatest number of fish, the worm is the only alternative. These burn trout, although very dark-coloured, are very sweet and good. Their average size is one-eighth of a pound.

TRAWL, OR DRAG NET, FOR SALMON AND SALMON-TROUT.

This net is used after sunset, and through the night, if the weather be fine and suitable ; it is most effective for taking salmon and salmon-trout. The best time to commence operations is when the tide is beginning to flow. Four men are required to draw the net ashore. The spots in the loch resorted to by salmon and salmon-trout, at the rise of the tide, are those close to the shore, where any burn or rivulet empties itself ; and

these must be approached in your boat as silently and cautiously as possible, so as not to alarm or disturb the fish. Two men will get into the water on one side, near the shore, with one end of the net, one having the upper, the other the lower rope ; you will then row to the other point which you wish to make, and let the other two men down with the other end of the net ; all parties will then commence simultaneously dragging the net ashore. You will very soon know whether you are successful or not, by the leaping and splashing of the fish enclosed. The person remaining in the boat, as there must be a fifth, will follow the net as closely as he can, in order that he may be ready to lift it off any stone or sea-weed with which it may chance to become entangled.

Before commencing this sport, it will be necessary, during the day, to reconnoitre perfectly the scene of your intended operations, so as to be thoroughly conversant with the nature of the shore ; by which means you will know exactly where you may let your men down into the water ; and sometimes it will be necessary to remove branches of trees, and other obstacles, which may have been brought down accidentally by the fresh water, as these, although small, if allowed to remain, might not only defeat your manœuvres, but tear and damage your net. Do not attempt to

enclose too large a space, or commence in too deep water, as the fish might escape by the sides before you have time to enclose them. A bottle of whisky, to regale the men after each draught, will be found to be not without its advantage.

This net may be used most effectively for other fish during the day, in fine, warm, sunny weather. For salmon, I believe, it is *now* illegal; in fact, trawling for even herrings is prohibited. Whether this restriction is necessary or not, for the protection of the herring, is a contested point.

LONG LINE, FOR COD, HADDOCK, CONGER EEL, &c. &c.

This line is productive of excellent sport in any loch where cod and haddock abound. The season for these fish commences in November, and extends through the winter months. As the season advances these fish gradually approach the mouth of the loch and proceed out to sea as far as the nearest bank, where they may be as easily taken as in the loch, subject of course to the suitability of the weather. In the loch, in ordinary

weather, a small well-built boat of from ten to twelve feet will be perfectly safe, especially if built expressly for this purpose; but in the open sea a much larger and stronger boat will be requisite. The long line may be from five to six thousand feet in length; one of six thousand feet would take five hundred hooks, and these must be twelve feet a part. The lines to which the hooks are attached are called snoodings, made of strong whipcord three feet in length; the hooks the ordinary size sold for cod fishing. The best bait is fresh herring. If you cannot get these, then salt ones, after being well soaked, will be a tolerable substitute. One herring will make three baits. The head must never be used.

It will require time and trouble to bait this line and arrange it properly in a basket for setting. Two buoys will be wanted, one at each end of the line, attached by a separate cord. The best time for setting this line, if fish are abundant, is at break of day, allowing it to remain in about three hours; if, however, fish be scarce, then it may be set in the evening and taken up the first thing in the morning. You cannot be too particular in this respect, as you may have taken some large conger eels; and although they may have remained perfectly quiet till morning, yet as soon as daylight appears they commence their endeavours to liberate themselves; in which attempt they are very

likely to be successful, greatly to the prejudice of your line.

Having ascertained the best place for setting your line, and having it baited and properly arranged, with your two buoys with a cord to each end of a hundred feet in length, or more, according to the depth of the loch, and two good-sized stones of sufficient weight to keep your line steady when set, you will proceed with your boat with two men, as one man would not suffice if there were anything of a sea. When arrived where you intend commencing, you will set one of your buoys afloat, it having been previously well filled with air and attached to one of the cords; to the extreme end of which you will fasten one of the stones and the end of the line, letting the same gradually down till it reaches the bottom, when the men may commence rowing the boat in the direction you desire as fast as the letting out of your line will admit of, taking care to keep the line tight during this operation. When you reach the other extremity of your line, you will fasten the other stone, and, after having attached the cord to which the other buoy is appended, you will let the stone gradually down, and then as you row off you may set the other buoy afloat; it will soon find its proper position.

If the two stones are of a proper weight, the line will lie steadily between its extreme points,

and offer sufficient resistance to hook the fish when they bite. Be very particular in fastening the stones securely. When you return to take up your line, you can proceed to either buoy, being guided in this respect by wind and tide; and having secured one draw in the line over your hand till you reach your main line with the hooks, you will then draw up the stone, and, having removed it, fasten the end of your line to the side of the fish basket or box; you will then commence gradually drawing up your fish, the man or men rowing keeping the boat in the position you wish.

Do not allow your line to become slack; and as you draw it in place it carefully and regularly in the basket, after the fish have been removed. The latter must be gaffed as soon as they reach the surface, and lifted into the boat; there being an experienced person *expressly* for this purpose; for this operation must be performed cleverly and promptly, or many a fish may escape, especially the large conger eels, whose throats it will be advisable to cut the moment you get them into the boat, as they are very savage and will sometimes make a disagreeable use of their teeth. Never attempt to lift a fish of any size into the boat with the line. The person who gaffs the fish ought to unhook them immediately they are in the boat, and till this is done you ought not to proceed in taking up your line.

With this line, in a good season, you will frequently fill your boat with first-rate fish. In addition to cod, haddock, ling, and conger eel, very fine large skate are taken; and when in condition and of the first quality are an excellent fish. In cold, frosty weather these fish are considerably improved by being hung up in the open air for several days; having, in the first instance, been skinned, the bad parts cut away, the remainder thoroughly cleaned and washed. Besides skate, various monsters of the deep are sometimes taken, more curious than serviceable.

The most amusing part of this fishing is the taking in of the line, although some consider the gaffing of the large fish equally amusing; and perhaps it is more exciting, especially where a large conger eel is in question, as from their tortuous, rapid, and violent evolutions, they are difficult to gaff exactly as you desire, and care is necessary in depositing them in the boat, so as, in the first instance, to avoid their teeth, before they are rendered harmless, this act being immediately necessary for your security; but the person who performs this operation will find a pair of waterproof overalls indispensably necessary, or a pair of long fishermen's boots, and also a thick pair of warm woollen gloves. In some of the lochs in the west of Scotland the cod and haddock are very fine, being weighty and of first-rate quality.

I have taken the former from 20 to 30 lbs. weight, and the latter from 5 to 8 lbs.

On one occasion, having visited a neighbouring loch in company with a friend (in the month of November), with the assistance of three men, and the use of a good boat, with our long line baited with salted herrings, as we could not procure fresh ones, we made two ventures, leaving our line in, on each occasion, three hours, and caught thirty fine cod and seven or eight haddock. Many of the cod were 25 lbs. weight, and some few 30 lbs.—none less than 10 or 12 lbs. weight. The haddock were from 5 to 8 lbs. weight, and as good in every respect as the Dublin Bay ones. If we had had fresh herrings, I am convinced our success would have been considerably greater. Our line had 500 hooks.

There are many other baits nearly as good as the herring. The mackerel comes first, and after that a shell-fish called bucky; and as these can be kept alive, fishermen generally have a good supply of them at hand. They are easily caught on those shores where they abound, by means of a wicker basket as a trap; it is flat at bottom and round at the top, with a small opening. The basket is baited with the offals of fish, and then let down to the bottom by a rope, a small buoy being attached to mark the position. There is a heavy stone in the inside of the basket to keep it down.

When shell fish get in they cannot escape. This basket is regularly drawn up, emptied of its contents, and replaced, and in this manner a vast quantity is taken.

Lobsters are taken in nearly a similar manner, by what are called "lobster pots." These are made of netting, supported by wicker hoops, with an opening at each end in form of a funnel, so that when the lobster once enters, he cannot possibly get out again; and from the size of the orifice, which is of wicker, attached to the netting, one would think he must have exercised extraordinary ingenuity to have contrived to have introduced himself. These pots are baited with fish, and set in a similar manner to those for buckies, but in deeper water, and in the immediate vicinity of a rocky coast, where they are generally numerous. There is a heavy stone in each "pot," to keep it down, a cord to secure it, and a buoy to indicate its position. There is sometimes a flat board, on which the net work is fixed for better security, this being underneath; a heavy stone in the interior carrying the whole apparatus steadily to the bottom.

LONG-LINE FISHING FOR HADDOCK, CODLING, WHITING, FLOUNDERS, &c.

This line needs not be either so long or so strong as the one used for larger fish. If you have 500 hooks, which is a fair quantity, your line must be 1,500 feet in length; the snoodings on which the hooks are fastened being only three feet apart: these are three feet long; two feet of strong whipcord, and one foot of horsehair; the hooks of moderate size, the common tin ones being the best. This line can be bought ready made, at any of the fishing-tackle shops in the large towns of Scotland. They are sometimes made with as many as 1,500 hooks; but a line of this size could not be baited and arranged for setting under an entire day, even if two skilful hands were employed; and two are requisite, one for the purpose of opening the mussels, the other for putting them on the hooks. For one man it would be an endless task; but a line of 500 hooks is sufficient to take a good quantity of fish, and show excellent sport; better, I have always thought, than the stronger line, as you take more fish, and a greater variety, though the weight will be considerably less.

The only bait for this line is the mussel; and some skill is requisite in opening the shell and

putting the bait securely on the hooks. If it be badly opened, or unskilfully put on your hooks, even if well opened, you may lose all your baits and take no fish ; you must, therefore, take care to get a person who thoroughly understands baiting the line to perform the operation. In the first place, the mussels must be taken out of the shell entire ; especial care being taken not to cut the head in half, as the hook must be passed through the head, that being the only hard part capable of holding it, and then twice through the body, the latter being twisted round, so as to cover the point of the hook ; with this precaution the bait cannot be taken without the fish being caught.

This line is set precisely in the same manner as the larger one, with two buoys and a stone at each end ; but there is some difference to be observed as to the time of setting it, and also as to the length of time of its remaining in the water. The best time for setting this line is at day-break. If there be plenty of fish in the loch one hour will be quite long enough to allow it to remain ; if fish be scarce, then two hours ; but on no account longer, as skate, large cod, and conger eels would take your whiting or small flounders, and break and damage your line, his line not being strong enough to hold heavy fish. It will hold haddock well enough ; but even

these, when large, must be humoured and played with as you draw them to the surface, always having some one ready by your side with the gaff, to hook and lift them out of the water.

The Scotch haddock are sometimes as fine and weighty as the Dublin Bay, being from five to eight pounds ; these, of course, require the gaff. If the weather prevent your setting this line in the morning, then the afternoon may be tried, about two or three hours before dark ; and if the tide be rising, this time will answer as well as the morning. It must be taken up in an hour, or hour and a half, as the operation of drawing it in will require nearly an hour in favourable weather, and considerably longer if the sea be rough, and you have many fish. This line will require the same number of hands, and similar management in taking up, as the larger one ; and must be deposited with equal care and regularity in the basket placed expressly to receive it. If the weather be fine and calm, the assistance of one man to row your boat, and another to gaff and unhook your fish, will be all that you will need ; but if the sea be rough, the boat cannot be kept steadily in the direction you wish it to be without two men at the oars ; and these men must thoroughly understand their business, otherwise the taking up of the line efficiently becomes a very difficult operation.

When the line is carefully taken up and depo-

sited methodically and regularly in the basket, it requires comparatively little time to prepare it for re-baiting and resetting; but if it be taken up in a careless and slovenly manner, and the fish not unhooked regularly, it will require hours to disentangle it. On being brought home it ought to be hung up immediately to dry, on a bar of wood placed horizontally between two poles; out of doors if the weather be fine and dry, within doors if it be damp or wet. Without this precaution it would soon become rotten and useless. When perfectly dry, it may be placed in the basket ready for re-baiting. This line, like all others, and nets, must be always kept out of the reach of mice and rats, especially when it is baited overnight, ready for setting in the morning. You cannot be too particular in this respect, the fresh mussel being an additional attraction.

DESTRUCTION OF VERMIN.

The preliminary measure towards the preservation of game is the destruction of vermin; without it, all other efforts and expense will be entirely unavailing; and as this can be accomplished by the adoption of proper means through

the instrumentality of assiduous and competent keepers, I will endeavour to explain some of the methods which I have known to have been adopted with the greatest success. I will, in the first place, commence with ground vermin, viz. common cats, polecats, stoats, weasels, badgers, &c., these being the greatest enemies of grouse, partridges, pheasants and hares. After having disposed of these, I will invite attention to flying vermin.

Of all ground vermin, the common cat, when once addicted to prowling, is by far the worst and most destructive to game, especially to partridges when they are breeding; for if they fail in seizing the old bird on the nest, the young birds, so soon as they are hatched, are certain to be victimised one by one, till the whole brood is destroyed; they are equally fatal to leverets. A keeper must therefore make a point of destroying these prowlers on the very first opportunity, as when once given to prowl they never relinquish the habit, and prefer killing their own food to being fed at home; fortunately for preservers of game, they are easily caught. For them, as well as for all other ground vermin, no trap is superior to a common steel trap. Care and judgment are requisite in setting it, so as to answer your purpose and not take game, or be interfered with by sheep or cattle, although an accident will occasionally happen, in spite of every precaution.

The best trap is one of the ordinary size, about four inches in breadth, and five inches in length. Be particular, when you buy your traps, to select such as are properly made, as they are frequently put together in so careless a manner as to be almost useless. The strength and temper of the spring must be ascertained; it should be curved, and fixed to the bottom plate by an iron pin. The curved springs will last for years, and seldom or ever break, their tension being general; whereas the flat springs, from the tension being chiefly in the centre, are constantly giving way, and thus occasioning both expense and disappointment. When the trap is set, the drop or plate should lie evenly and horizontally between the teeth; if it be either below, or above, or oblique, it is faulty, and ought to be rejected. In setting, the catch must be regulated by the weight of the vermin you expect to take; it can be set so lightly that a mouse may spring it, or otherwise, according to circumstances. A keeper who understands his business will easily find out where cats or any kind of ground vermin are in the habit of resorting, by carefully examining, on the morning after a shower, and on all other suitable occasions, the gateways, roadways, and other passes, for the footmarks of the enemy, and, when found, he will do well to set his trap under the hedge, wall, or by the side of the nearest ditch to the pass or

run. The trap must never be set *in* a run or pass, as it might take game; and it is not at all necessary to be placed there, as any vermin, in passing a run, will scent a well-baited trap at a long distance.

The best season for trapping is during the months of February, March, and April; the vermin are then on the move, and by killing them at this period of the year, before they commence breeding, you get rid of a generation of enemies. Having selected a favourable spot, you will cut away the earth so as exactly to receive the trap, in such a manner as, when set, will admit of its lying perfectly even with the surface of the ground; you will then drive the stake, to which your trap is fastened by a chain, firmly into the ground. After having done this, if your hand be not sufficiently strong for the purpose, place your foot carefully on the spring of the trap, gradually contracting it; you will then easily fix the catch over the side of one of the jaws to the drop or plate, so as to hold it firmly in its proper position.

Whilst you are removing your foot or hand from the spring, to secure your fingers from the risk of being caught, in the event of the trap being accidentally sprung, place a small stick under the plate; this will hold it firmly, and enable you to set your trap as you desire, and cover it in such a manner as not to be perceived. When *this* is done, you may

carefully withdraw the stick from under the plate. Not only the trap, but the chain and top of the stake must be perfectly covered, so as not to be in the slightest degree perceptible, either with grass or moss, or with whatever the land contiguous may be covered. The grass which covers the plate and teeth must be cut with a sharp knife into minute portions, so that on the trap being sprung it may close without impediment, and no part of its covering remain between the teeth. The bait ought to be on the top of a stick, inserted firmly into the ground, in the rear of the trap, about four inches above it, by which means it is scented at a long distance on either side of the trap. If the trap be set under a wall, large stones may be placed on either side and over it; if stones be wanting, then bushes; so that the vermin cannot get at the bait without passing over the plate of the trap. In a country where there are walls you will always have stones at hand for the purpose; and there is no place equal to the side of a wall for a trap, especially at the corner near any ditch,—under a wall and the sides of a ditch being favourite runs for vermin. A few yards distant from where a drain passes under a wall is also an excellent place.

If the trap be set in any open place it must be surrounded by bushes, leaving one small opening. The keeper must visit his traps regularly every

morning at daybreak, so as to prevent the escape of any vermin that may be only slightly caught, and also in order to prevent their being interfered with by boys or other persons who may be on your grounds. The best bait is the inside of a rabbit or fowl, part of a wild duck or green plover; if you cannot get these a blackbird will do, but it is not so attractive a bait as the former. A wild duck will make four baits, a plover two. The same bait will sometimes last a week or ten days. If no vermin be caught, the traps had better be sprung and reset every second or third day; as by their remaining in one position any length of time they may become inoperative from rust. The man who attends to them should always have in his game bag a file, a small hammer, and a bottle of oil, all which articles are required in extensive trapping. The same system of trapping can be adopted on the moors, placing the traps near large heaps of stones, or near rocks, or by a ditch or rivulet side, great care being taken to protect them from the encroachment of sheep; but where large, flat, weighty stones can be procured, and there is generally no lack of them in Scotland, a very efficient deadly and inexpensive trap can be set, liable to no objections. Three small sticks alone are requisite; two placed perpendicularly under the stone so as to support it, one resting on the other, a notch or stop being made

in the lower one, so as to receive the one above it; the two being kept together by the third, which is placed horizontally, a notch having been cut in it exactly fitting the other two. On the extreme end of this stick, which must be directed immediately under the stone, the bait is fixed, and, when touched, the three sticks instantly give way, and the stone falls flat on the victim, reducing him to the shape of a pancake. A small flat stone or piece of slate must be placed under the bottom stick, so as to prevent its sinking into the ground under the weight of the stone, as that might impede its direct and instantaneous fall. The lower stick may be about eight inches in length, the upper one six inches, and the horizontal one twelve. The step in the lower stick, on which the upper one rests, may be about three inches in length. If the horizontal stick be made to fit correctly it will not only hold the other two firmly together, but be disengaged the instant it is touched.

As this trap only costs the trouble of setting, it is the best that can be set for cats in the vicinity of cottages and all other places where a steel trap would be liable to be stolen. In large woods where traps are kept up permanently, wooden hutches, similar to those used by warreners for rabbits, are very serviceable; but these are expensive and require time and trouble to place them, but when once fixed may remain the year round. The best situa-

tion for them is in an old, unfrequented road, in the centre of which they ought to be placed, with a hedge on either side about eighteen inches in height, carried to a distance of six or eight feet. These traps can be made by any village carpenter, from oaken or other slabs; the former are, however, the best, being more durable. The bait must be in the inside of the trap, hung up immediately over the drop or plate; so that the former cannot be reached without the latter being trod upon by the vermin; in which case the doors instantly fall, securing the enemy. The doors of the trap should not be raised above three inches; if higher, pheasants or hares may enter and be caught; and, in consequence of this liability, these traps must be constantly looked after, as it is not an uncommon trick on the part of poachers to visit them in the evening, set them higher, and come early in the morning and help themselves to any game which may be caught. The inside of the doors should be lined with tin, to prevent the vermin from biting their way out. There should be a small sliding door at the top of the trap, through which the bait may be introduced and fixed; it will also admit of your ascertaining the nature of the prisoner when the doors are down. If you have vermin dogs with you, you can open the doors, and allow them to settle the account; if you are without them, raise one of the doors about an inch, or rather

higher, as may be necessary, according to the size of the delinquent, who will immediately on seeing the light try to make his escape; which you will prevent by securing his neck with the door with one hand; a heavy stick in the other settles the account.

Polecats and house cats are very tough, and "die hard," but are not so difficult to kill as badgers, these being very formidable antagonists to the best of dogs; nevertheless, there are dogs who will enter a badger's earth, draw and kill him single-handed, but not without suffering severely from the conflict, their bite being very sharp and incisive. When they once get their teeth well fixed they seldom relinquish their hold until death closes the scene. They are easily caught by setting a trap in their runs near their earth; but the trap must be double the size of an ordinary vermin trap, with additional strength of spring and of the chain by which it is fastened to the stake. The latter must be well driven into the ground, and ought to be about a foot or eighteen inches in length; if not made very secure, the badger will easily extract it, and escape with the trap into his earth, their strength, relatively to their size, being extraordinary.

When in quest of badgers, if you cannot find their earth, search for the place where they have recently been feeding; which you will easily dis-

cover by the upturned earth where there is cow-dung, as they work there in quest of beetles, on which they chiefly subsist. They are not very destructive of game, except when they have young ones; and then they will take eggs, or any young game they may find; and being offenders to this extent are considered in the light of vermin by keepers, and treated accordingly. The trap for these animals must be set very carefully; every part of it, and all that appertains to it, must be well covered and concealed; otherwise they will discover and avoid it, being very cautious and distrustful. They seldom or ever come out of their earths the first night the trap is set; from which it may be inferred they are well aware of some one having approached their retreat, and are on that account fearful to venture out. Should you not take them on their leaving their earth, and you fancy anything has occurred to alarm them, you may then remove your traps, as they will not return to that earth again, but move off to some fresh abode.

Otters are also easily alarmed, and in the same manner, and move off immediately to some distant retreat. For them the same kind of trap must be set, and in the same cautious and particular manner; at the entrance of the earth is the best place; within it, if there be cattle feeding in the immediate vicinity of your operations.

Set two traps, if possible, as one may be avoided. Their places of resort are easily discovered by the quantity of work made near their earths, and by their well-beaten tracks to them. They are generally on the banks of rivers, on the sides of fresh or sea-water lochs, or on the sea coast where the coast is rocky. Their earths are mostly under large rocks or stones, or under the root of an old tree. They are not amphibious, as they cannot live under water, although they can dive very well, and remain below the surface a long time; but still they are obliged to come up at intervals for fresh air. Buffon says, they do not venture into the sea; but this is a great mistake, as I have frequently seen them swimming and diving in the sea in pursuit of fish, and I nearly caught one one night in a drag net, when trawling off the sea coast for salmon. I have also found numerous earths close by the sea, with well-beaten tracks leading directly from them to the water's edge, and caught several at these places.

A farmer living on the same coast, on whose veracity I can depend, told me he once witnessed an interesting contest between an otter and a conger eel. He first perceived the otter, at about fifty yards' distance from the shore, arrive at the surface of the water, having fast hold of the eel; but he no sooner reached the surface, than the eel dragged him under the water again. The

contest lasted in this manner for upwards of a quarter of an hour; the otter, on each succeeding occasion of his reaching the surface of the water, arriving a little nearer the shore; till at last he accomplished his object, having vanquished his antagonist, and dragged him on shore. The otter was, however, so much exhausted, and so dead beat, after his victory, that he allowed the farmer to approach him in the rear, unheard and unperceived, when he struck him on the head with a large stone, and secured him.

I have also been told by some sailors who were lying at anchor in a smack on the same coast in an adjoining loch, that they have frequently seen several otters co-operating simultaneously in dragging conger eels from the sea up the rocks to their retreats; thus assisting one another in securing their prey. They are very numerous on the sea coast and on the rocky banks of the sea-water lochs in the west of Scotland. It requires a very good dog to face and kill them, as they are very savage and bite very sharply, and the old ones possess as much strength as a good-sized dog. Although they do not interfere with game, I have alluded to them, as their skins are worth having, and when trapping vermin in their locality, it is just worth the trouble to set a few traps for them. In the immediate vicinity of fish ponds they do considerable damage, and are very

obnoxious, inasmuch as they kill and destroy all the fish coming within their reach, their slaughter not being limited by their necessities. The otter has three, sometimes four young ones.

I will now direct the reader's attention to the various methods of taking and destroying birds of prey, viz., hawks, hoodies, jays, and magpies. There are several kinds of hawks, all more or less destructive of game; the most so are the *Hen-Harrier* and the *Blue Falcon*. The cock hen-harrier, or ringtail as it is sometimes called, is of a lightish blue, with two white marks or rings round his tail, within an inch or two of the extremity, which is white. There are also two black lines near the extreme points of his wings. His length between the extreme points of his wings is between three and four feet. The hen bird is of a light brown, with the same white marks about the tail and wings as the cock bird. These birds have the credit of making two repasts daily of either grouse, partridge, duck, or plover, and as they will only remain where game abounds, they are not often disappointed.

When in quest of game, they may be seen beating and quartering their ground as regularly as any pointer or setter, crossing backwards and forwards within a few yards of the surface, till they have found their prey, when they instantly descend without the delay or ceremony of hover-

ing over their victims, practised by some others of their tribe. These birds breed and roost in the long thick heather, having their nest on the ground; the eggs, which are whitish, are from four to five in number. As the trap is not always successful, the gun must be resorted to; and this rarely fails, although it may sometimes require time and patience, except in the breeding season, to obtain a favourable opportunity of using it. There are two plans, either of which may be adopted with success. The one is to find out the roosting place, which can be done by watching their flight in the evening, and when you have found that, to go there before sunset and await their arrival, taking care to conceal yourself in such a manner as not to be seen. You may then have a good chance of killing them, as the pair are frequently together. The other plan is to find out their daily beats, as they generally take day by day the same course; and when you have found this, select the best place you can for concealment, from which you may be likely to have a fair shot. You may have a chance the first day, or may be obliged to wait a week or ten days before one occurs; the morning and the evening are the best time. Just before the breeding season, when you are certain of finding two together, it is not a bad plan, on finding out the roosting place, to endeavour to kill only the

female, and not return again till after an interval of three days, when you will find that the cock has brought another female. I have known a keeper, by adopting this plan, kill seven female birds, and thus get rid of the whole breed in the vicinity for at least one season.

If traps be used for this bird, they may either be baited, or merely placed and concealed on those spots in the line of the bird's daily course where he has been seen to rest. There are always certain prominent points where he is in the habit of settling for the purpose of reconnoitring, and these are easily discovered by watching him in his flight. If the trap be baited, a lark will often be found to answer the purpose. This must be laid very neatly on the plate of the trap, with open wings and breast exposed, every part of the trap being carefully concealed, having in the first instance been let into the ground, so as to lie evenly and horizontally with the surface. Two or three traps, baited and set in this manner in some prominent parts in the line of the bird's daily course, may frequently be successful. This plan may be adopted simultaneously with the gun, as every means ought to be adopted to get rid of this most destructive bird, especially on the moors, where the mischief done by it is so extensive, that I am persuaded if half a dozen of them were left unmolested on the very best

moors, in the spring of the year, till the month of August, that the whole breed of grouse would be almost entirely destroyed.

The Blue, or *Peregrine Falcons*, are equally destructive to game on the moors; but they are not so common as the hen harrier. These birds build in the wildest parts of the mountains, in the highest and most inaccessible rocks, and can be shot in the breeding season, by awaiting their arrival at their nests in concealment. The hen bird is very handsome; the back of the head and near it is of a darkish blue; outside of the wings, lighter blue, and in the centre of the back and towards the points of the wings; the under part of the neck white; the breast buff, covered with darkish spots, the lower part with dark streaks. Its weight from two pounds to two pounds and a half. Length between the extreme points of the wings, from 38 to 42 inches; from the beak to the end of the tail 17 inches. The legs and claws are amazingly strong and powerful; the legs yellow, the claws black; the beak is short and strong, the upper part curved and pointed, longer than the lower part; both are jagged and denticulated. At the root of the beak there is a yellow rim nearly half an inch in depth; there is also a yellow rim or border round the eyes, which are large.

I must not omit to mention the *Merlin*, which,

although a small hawk, is very mischievous, and does considerable damage amongst grouse and partridges; and although it only weighs half a pound, will knock down a black cock. It is extremely active and astonishingly quick in flight. Both the cock and female are handsome, but the cock is the handsomer of the two; his head, back, and outside of the wings are of a darkish blue; the throat white, with some brown and reddish feathers between the white of the throat and the blue of the head; the breast is of a brownish red. The female is of a lighter blue on the head, back, and outside of the wings; the breast buff coloured, streaked with brown; the beak short, the upper one curved and sharp: the claws long and very sharp. Length from point of beak to end of tail 13 inches; the tail 6 inches. These birds build in fir trees, and may be easily shot in the breeding season.

The *Kestrels* do but little damage to game, living chiefly on mice; they also feed their young with them. They, however, sometimes take small birds; and, should they encounter any young partridges or young pheasants, they will take them. These are easily shot in the breeding season.

The *Sparrow Hawk* is a very destructive bird, especially fatal to partridges and young pheasants. The female is larger, heavier, and of greater

length than the cock bird. They are very sharp-sighted, and quick in flight, and active in their movements; they skim along the surface of the ground with amazing rapidity, pouncing upon their game almost as soon as found, and seldom miss their aim. They are rarely to be seen on the moors, but generally frequent inclosures. They build in low trees; sometimes in a white or black thorn bush. The cock bird is about the same length as the merlin, but a little larger and heavier; the hen bird is 3 or 4 inches longer, and much heavier.

The *Kite*, although comparatively little destructive of game, deserves some notice; being a fine-looking, handsome bird, particularly distinguished from the rest of the tribe by his forked tail, which he seems to use as a rudder, after having attained his lofty aerial position, soaring without a perceptible effort, and sometimes apparently motionless. The acuteness of his sight may be ascertained and judged of, if we watch his descent from his lofty position to some prey which he has been surveying on discovery from an almost incredible distance, either in the shape of mice, young game, leverets, or sometimes, if pressed by hunger, carrion, or dead fish, if near the sea shore. Of the latter, some authors tell us they are very fond. They are not either so swift or so active as the other more rapacious hawks, and therefore sel-

dom pursue or take game, except it be young, disabled, or wounded; and then they are very vigorous and successful in pursuit, as I frequently witnessed during one season in France whilst snipe shooting.

In a *marais* abounding with snipes, where I frequently shot during the whole of one winter, there was one of these fine birds. He used to watch and accompany me through the day, flying from one peat stack to another, but always keeping out of shot, awaiting his opportunity of immediately pouncing upon any snipe I might wound; and he frequently robbed me of more than one in the same day, without ever giving me the chance of a shot at him. He seldom pursued snipes that were not wounded; but he instantly, with extraordinary instinct, distinguished and pursued the wounded ones, which he speedily caught and carried off.

I never saw him take a snipe which was not wounded, although I occasionally observed him pursuing them, and watched the chase a long time, till the snipe escaped. They generally ascended an amazing height, and the course was very interesting; it was similar to *one* greyhound pursuing a hare, a second kite being wanted to take the snipe at the turn. After having robbed me of one snipe, he would sometimes return again the same day, and deprive me of a second; but

sometimes I did not see him until I next visited the *marais*.

I have seen but few of these birds in those parts of Scotland where I have resided. Kites sometimes visit farmyards, and carry off young chickens and ducks, with a degree of boldness not usually characteristic of them; but I should rather imagine, when they venture on these feats of audacity, they are urged by excessive hunger, in which extremity, all hawks are very daring, as I have frequently witnessed, in the case of both the merlin and falcon. The former I have lately seen on two occasions pursuing a thrush or other small bird within a few yards of me, backwards and forwards, nothing daunted. I unfortunately had not my gun with me; and in the month of August, when grouse shooting, a single grouse rose before me and a brother sportsman, and was immediately shot by the latter. The grouse had no sooner reached the ground, than a falcon descended on him with the rapidity of lightning, and was instantly shot by my friend's second barrel, his claws being firmly fixed in the grouse. There were three other persons present, and several dogs, so that there can be no question as to the boldness of the falcon. He was, however, only a one-year-old bird. Where he came from previous to this display of boldness and audacity none of our party could tell, as he was not seen until within

a few yards of the grouse in the very act of pouncing upon it. He probably had been watching our operations within a short distance, and possibly within sight, although he had escaped our observation.

In addition to the above-mentioned hawks, *Hooddies*, Jays, and Magpies, merit some attention, but especially the first of the three, they being more destructive to game than the whole tribe of hawks and ground vermin together, and combine cunning with extreme audacity. They are like the roysten crows in appearance. In the spring of the year they are constantly in quest of eggs and young birds, and if allowed to remain on the ground would destroy the best-stocked manor. They are easily caught in traps; but are sometimes so very numerous as to defy complete removal in this way, although I have sometimes found that trapping a few of them frightens the remainder off the ground; but as it is only for a few days, a more potent and infallible remedy must therefore be resorted to, and that is *poison*. This of course must be used with care and cautiously; but as two days will suffice to clear the ground, a person may be constantly in attendance during the operation, so as to prevent the possibility of accident.

A hare, rabbit, or any kind of game makes an excellent bait; if you cannot get game, a

cat will do equally well. With either hare, rabbit, or cat, separate the flesh from the skin, within a small portion of the backbone, leaving the body just sufficiently attached to the skin to keep it in its place. You will slice the body in every direction with a sharp knife, and introduce into all the spaces portions of nux vomica, corrosive sublimate, and strychnine. Place this on the ground where the hoodies resort, having previously informed the farmers of your intention, in order that they may keep their dogs at home. So soon as one hooddy discovers the bait he will soon attract others, and their united noise will collect the whole flight; the bait will soon be torn to pieces and devoured. On the following day scarcely a live bird will be visible; many will be found dead on the spot, the others will have taken their departure not to return. The remnants of the bait may then be removed and buried deep in the earth, so as to be out of the reach of dogs.

Magpies and *Jays* may be easily caught at any time with a common steel trap; and ought to be disposed of before the breeding season commences, as they commit serious havoc among partridges and pheasants, by robbing their nests of eggs, which they are but too successful in finding. A common hen's egg is an excellent bait. This must be placed on the ground in the rear of the

trap; but so surrounded by bushes, that the magpie cannot reach it without passing over the plate of the trap. The trap must be as carefully set and as well concealed as for other vermin. Independently of taking eggs, both jays and magpies will destroy young partridges and pheasants; they therefore constantly merit a keeper's attention.

In some parts of Scotland *Buzzards* abound—a very large, strong hawk. These are easily taken in traps. Hares, dead sheep, and not unfrequently young lambs are their prey; occasionally they will take reptiles. I saw a viper, or slow-worm, extracted from one after being shot. It had, however, been decapitated previous to being swallowed; the body of the reptile being entire in the bird's throat, with the exception of the head, that being the only poisonous part.

In the spring of the year buzzards may be seen hovering over any dead sheep or lamb on the hills: a few traps set immediately round the dead animals are sure to be successful; at other times, a bird, or flesh of any kind, will be a good bait. These birds build in old trees, or in high rocks, where there are bushes; sometimes in an old crow's nest. They have two or three eggs, larger than a hen's egg, spotted with reddish

brown. If not found until the breeding season, they are then easily shot at the nest.

Some gentlemen disapprove of keepers carrying a gun at any season of the year, and think that all vermin can, and ought to be, killed by trapping. I cannot say I subscribe to so unsound an opinion; on the contrary, I think that a keeper ought never to be without his gun when going his rounds, especially during the spring and summer; for, however assiduous and skilful he may be in trapping, it is impossible he can destroy all the flying vermin without the use of his gun; and if he is constantly on his ground, as he ought to be, innumerable unexpected fair chances and opportunities will present themselves of his destroying hawks and other birds of prey, which he could not otherwise have availed himself of.

I shall be happy to be informed how the hen-harrier, falcon, and merlin are to be destroyed, without having recourse to the gun. The most expert trapper may take a few, but he cannot take all of them, and without his gun will lose many of the most favourable opportunities; besides, it frequently happens that many of the above hawks are only visitors on your grounds, in quest of game, and roost and breed on the adjoining moors. It will therefore be necessary for

the keeper to be on the alert, and avail himself of every opportunity and chance which may occur to prevent his ground being devastated by these daily visitors, either by watching their arrival, or by awaiting their return; and this he can only do by having his gun constantly with him. If a keeper is not to be trusted with a gun, he is not fit to be on the ground.

I have known extensive grounds on which the hen harrier never bred, but which were constantly visited by them from the adjoining moors in quest of game: and if they are successful, which they invariably are if there be any amount of game, you are sure to receive a daily visit from them; and as they generally pursue the same line of country, they may be shot to a certainty by awaiting their arrival in concealment. In these instances I have known traps succeed, baited with larks, as before suggested. But it frequently happens that there is no suitable spot for setting a trap, owing to the ground being overrun by sheep and cattle, in which case the gun is the only remedy.

One writer on this subject, who is very adverse to keepers carrying guns, and thinks the practice ought on no account to be allowed, advises you to leave hawks unmolested till the young birds are fledged, and then to take them out of their nest, secure them within bushes on the ground

near the nest, traps being set all round the bushes for the purpose of taking both the old birds. Admitting, for argument's sake, this plan to be completely successful, I cannot think the success would repay, or compensate for, the delay, as the number of grouse which would be destroyed on a good moor by a brace of hen-harriers or falcons, between the time of the old birds sitting upon the eggs and the young birds being fledged, would be ruinous. Each falcon and each hen-harrier would have at least one grouse or black game a day—two, if they could get them; and those who have seen these birds at work, will be more inclined to believe in their success than in their failure: besides, the evidences of their success are to be found in all directions on the moors where they have been allowed to remain unmolested, however short the time may have been. I am therefore decidedly of opinion, that the moment these birds are seen on your ground, the keepers ought to be unremitting in their efforts to destroy them, as each day's delay, at this season of the year, involves a most serious loss, not of single birds, but of packs. Traps set for the falcon on the points of rocks near the nest, where they have been observed to have alighted; may sometimes be successful; but as the falcon builds in the highest and steepest rocks, where access to the nest and these resting-places is always most

difficult, and sometimes impossible, the only certain alternative is the gun.

The hen bird may be shot by the keeper's lying in concealment near the nest, if he can find a good position; but, having once placed himself, he must on no account move until a certain chance presents itself, as, if once detected, he would have great difficulty in getting a second chance. Before the keeper conceals himself, it is a good plan, and one which I have known adopted with immediate success, for two persons to accompany him to the spot, and, after having located him in concealment, to walk quietly off to a distance. The hen bird, thinking the coast clear, will descend to her nest within a few minutes; but as she will make many evolutions in the air above the nest, so as thoroughly to inspect the contiguous ground before she ventures to settle near the nest, the keeper must exercise every caution, and be prompt in availing himself of the first fair chance. If he succeed in killing the hen bird, and is not subsequently equally successful with the cock, the latter will most probably leave the ground, and will only return immediately in the event of his finding another female; but should he fail in this respect, he may not be visible till the ensuing spring, when he will be accompanied by another hen bird.

As the hen-harriers build on the ground, they

may be either shot or trapped early in the breeding season; but, as I have before insisted, the sooner the better, as each day's delay involves a serious loss of game, especially after the young hawks are hatched, and require food. I know an instance of seven young grouse, as I have mentioned elsewhere, being found in a hen-harrier's nest, after the keeper had killed the old birds; the young hawks were fledged at the time, as it happened to be late in the season when this nest was found.

My opinion as to the policy of killing the hen bird immediately you can do so, is confirmed by each succeeding year's experience. I have recently killed four female hawks from the nest, one of them a falcon; the four were either laying their eggs or sitting upon them, I could not tell which, as the places selected for their nests were altogether inaccessible, being in high, rugged, precipitous rocks. A fortnight has elapsed since my killing them, and I have been constantly on the hills in the immediate vicinity of the nests, but not one of the cock birds has since been visible; from which fact, I think it may be fairly inferred they have left the ground, not having found hen birds.

It is now in the beginning of the month of May: the cock birds may return again with female birds this season; but they have rarely

done so on any previous year of my experience, as far as I have been able to judge, after any long interval, till the following breeding season; and as I have been constantly on the same ground both winter and summer during the last three years, it is possible I may not be mistaken. If this be the case, the argument in favour of the immediate destruction of the female will preponderate over that urged in behalf of leaving the nest unmolested till the young birds are fledged, with the chance of trapping both the old birds; for, even admitting this method to be generally successful, I presume it is not invariably a certainty. But what is an infallible certainty connected with this plan, is a vast sacrifice of game, and that at the most important season of the year, just when birds are breeding; so that you may estimate your loss, when hen-harriers and falcons are left to breed, not by single birds, but by packs; and as the young birds would not be fledged for three weeks or a month from the time when the first opportunity of killing the hen bird at the nest might have presented itself, I leave it to those who are cognisant of the destructiveness of these hawks to form their own opinion on the subject.

THE END.

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